



**The International School  
of The Hague**

Secondary

# **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

**2018-2019**

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## INTRODUCTION

At the International School of The Hague (ISH) we seek to create and maintain a positive and safe environment for our community. We pride ourselves on the core values of honesty, fairness, and respect, and we expect all members of the community - students, staff, and families - to interact in accordance with these principles. Every person has the right to feel safe and to have a sense of belonging. A person who bullies another is denying them that right. As IB Learners, ISH students act in accordance with the IB Learner Profile and are expected to be Open Minded, Caring and Principled. Our school community is aware of, and sensitive to cultural, ethnic and linguistic differences and we do not tolerate bullying.

The procedure detailed in this policy supports our school's values and is in compliance with Dutch law. It aims to prevent and address any bullying issues among students and thus to foster their emotional, social and physical well-being. This can only be achieved through collaboration between students, staff and parents/guardians.

In all bullying cases we recognise that both the victim and initiator can be damaged by the interactions and that the initiator's behaviours are often the result of other underlying issues. Therefore we offer appropriate support and promote resilience in the one harmed and the one causing harm. Each case is addressed according to its individual circumstances, with an aim to achieve reconciliation, conflict resolution, and prevention of future occurrences.

## WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is very serious and must be treated as such. To ensure that any response is proportionate, it is vital to confirm that bullying has indeed taken place.

### **Bullying is:**

- Systematic, sustained and usually needs intervention in order to stop;
- Carried out with the intent to harm (physically, materially, psychologically);
- Carried out by one person or a group of people.

Bullying is when a person or a group of people deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage personal property, reputation or social acceptance in a repeated manner over time. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to factors such as age, size, status or other reasons.

Bullying may occur because of perceived differences including, but not limited to, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, physical appearance, age, economic status or the holding or expression of particular personal or political views. Bullying may be motivated by jealousy, distrust, fear, misunderstanding or lack of knowledge. It can continue over time and is often hidden from adults. The behavior may continue if no action is taken.



However, it must be noted that there is a very fine line between teasing and bullying. If the teasing is ongoing and the child being teased perceives the jokes as unpleasant, the child is the victim of another person's unkind behaviour toward them, however innocent. We also need to be aware of the different perception of irony and sarcasm due to differences in cultural backgrounds, linguistic and cognitive ability.

## IDENTIFYING BULLYING

There are several types of bullying:

<b>Direct physical bullying</b>	Can include hitting, kicking, tripping, and pushing, continuously invading personal space or taking (without permission) or damaging another's property
<b>Direct verbal bullying</b>	Can include - name calling, insults, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or any other form of verbal abuse.
<b>Indirect bullying</b>	Is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes: lying and spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, and encouraging others to socially exclude someone, damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance. Taking (without permission) or damaging another's property.
<b>Cyberbullying</b>	Is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. It can include: <b>Flaming</b> (online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages), <b>Harassment</b> (repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages; pressuring another person to share sexually explicit pictures and messages or; sends another person unwanted inappropriate pictures and messages), <b>Denigration</b> (posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships), <b>Outing</b> (sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online), <b>Exclusion</b> (intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group) <b>Cyber-stalking</b> (repeated intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear).



**Bullying is not:**

<b>Mutual conflict</b>	An argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem.
<b>Social rejection or dislike</b>	Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
<b>Single-episode</b>	Acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation, while unacceptable, are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.
<b>Teasing</b>	When the people involved have a good and equal relationship; teasing generally involves a sense of play and mutual joking around; it is not meant to be aggressive or threatening and it occurs occasionally rather than on a regular basis.



## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To prevent bullying, it is important that all members of the community recognise their own role and responsibilities, which are detailed below:

All students have the responsibility to:	All staff have the responsibility to:	All parents and guardians have the responsibility to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Show respect for all members of the school community.</li><li>• Treat others with courtesy, kindness and respect.</li><li>• Take responsibilities for their own actions; value others, allowing for individual differences and similarities.</li><li>• Not take part in bullying in any way either as an initiator or a bystander.</li><li>• Understand and not tolerate the participatory role of bystanders.</li><li>• Speak out against bullying and report it.</li><li>• Report if they are bullied.</li><li>• Support students who are bullied.</li><li>• Support the Student Council to assist with anti-bullying suggestions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community.</li><li>• Treat others with courtesy, kindness and respect.</li><li>• Apply knowledge of the school's bullying prevention policy.</li><li>• Model bullying prevention attitudes and behaviour.</li><li>• Be alert, attentive, proactive and responsive to potential signs and behaviours of bullying behaviour.</li><li>• Respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school's bullying prevention policy.</li><li>• Document all incidents of bullying and harassment in line with the school's required processes.</li><li>• Provide support and refer as needed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community.</li><li>• Treat others with courtesy, kindness and respect.</li><li>• Be aware of the school's bullying prevention policy and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour.</li><li>• Support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the school's bullying prevention policy.</li><li>• Watch for signs of distress in their child.</li><li>• Report incidents of school related bullying behaviour to the school.</li><li>• Provide support and encourage their child to seek help.</li><li>• Work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.</li></ul>

Please also refer to:

Appendix 1: **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS FOR PARENTS AND STAFF**

Appendix 2: **ADVICE FOR PARENTS**

Appendix 3: **ADVICE FOR STUDENTS**



## **PREVENTION**

ISH employs a range of strategies to prevent bullying from taking place, these include the following;

### **FlourISH Mentor Programme**

In the FlourISH programme the issue of bullying is addressed with the following objectives:

- a. Understanding and accepting differences, for example cultural differences, sexual differences, learning and behaviour challenges or social background
- b. Building on character strengths: i.e: confidence, saying no, mindful responses, how to get along, group dynamics, perception versus reality
- c. Awareness of the impact of bullying on the victim, perpetrator, class and the social environment
- d. Understanding why people bully
- e. What to do when bullying occurs / how to report / who to inform / how to solve
- f. Understanding the consequences for those who bully

### **Rocks and Water Training**

The Learning Support and Counselling Department, deliver additional training for students and staff using the 'Rocks and Water' programme. This programme seeks to develop personal qualities such as resilience and self-confidence. In cases where bullying has already taken place, this can support both victim and initiator. The training may also be recommended to students who are considered to be at risk of assuming either role.

### **Information Gathering**

The school conducts yearly surveys of the student body about bullying. The data collected is used to review and develop policy and procedures to ensure efficacy.

### **Wellbeing Coordinator**

A Wellbeing Coordinator acts as a central point of contact for students, staff & parents. The coordinator's role helps to support ease of reporting, and they liaise with relevant members of the pastoral team and Learning Support and Counselling Department to follow up on cases of bullying. They also use their experience to support the Secondary Leadership Team in the development of policy.



## **PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CASES OF BULLYING OR SUSPECTED BULLYING**

1. All cases of bullying must be treated with urgency, sensitivity, and discretion.
2. If a member of the ISH community witnesses or receives information pertaining to a suspected incident of bullying they must report it as soon as possible to the Well-being Coordinator or a member of the relevant pastoral team. This may be verbally, but a subsequent email must be sent detailing the incident and what the member of staff witnessed occurring between the students involved or what was reported to them.
3. The Year Leader with the support of the Assistant Year Leader will fully investigate by:
  - Interviewing those involved and collecting written accounts
  - Seeking to identify the facts and circumstances of the bullying or suspected bullying
4. If it is determined that bullying has taken place the parents/guardians will be informed by the school and appropriate actions/sanctions according to the *ISH Expectations and Consequences Policy 2016-2017* will be implemented.

***In addition, the school reserves the right to consult with external bodies, if necessary.***

5. In all cases, the school seeks to provide support for both victim and initiator. Subsequent supportive measures may include:
  - After discussion with the victim, determine how they would like to proceed. If they indicate their willingness, act as a mediator so that the victim can discuss the matter with the bully/harasser so that they can make amends and plans for future behaviour.
  - Other teachers are informed of incidents in order to help monitor any further incidents and to follow up consistently.
  - Oversee the behaviour of students involved for an appropriate time following this discussion. Both the victim and initiator may need support to avoid repeated incidents and this will be monitored by teacher and leadership.
  - Provide counselling/education for both the bully and victim, to develop different social and emotional learning competencies to prevent future occurrences.

These strategies will be employed in preference to disciplinary actions and negative consequences, although disciplinary arrangements will be enacted where appropriate in accordance with the ISH Expectations and Consequences Policy.

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassment, a referral should be made to the Pastoral Team and Learning Support and Counselling Department. Where appropriate the student will be put on a Behaviour Support Plan. This may include referral to outside agencies for evaluation.

If a student's bullying or harassing behaviour continues despite school efforts and represents a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing of themselves or other individuals within the school, the school will support the family in finding alternative schooling.

***Please note that cases of cyberbullying that affect school members are addressed by the school, regardless of whether the actions are carried out in school or not.***



## **APPENDIX 1**

### **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS FOR PARENTS AND STAFF**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and report any concerns to the Wellbeing Coordinator and/or relevant pastoral team member. These include, but are not limited to:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to make less effort with school work than previously
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- has dinner or other money continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received
- lack of eye contact
- becoming short tempered
- change in attitude to people at home.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and they should be investigated.





## **APPENDIX 2**

### **ADVICE TO PARENTS**

- If you identify any concerning signs or symptoms, report them immediately to the Year Leader. We have a comprehensive pastoral team and Learning Support and Counselling Department who will fully investigate and provide support, as necessary for your child. Collaboration between the home and school is a vital part of this support.
- If your child informs you that they are being bullied,
  - Do not:
    - Attempt to deal with the problem yourself by speaking to the child whom you think may be behaving inappropriately towards your child or by speaking to their parents.
    - Encourage your child to be 'a bully' back or to try to retaliate towards the other student.
  - Do:
    - Inform the school as soon as possible. It is vital that we have the opportunity to fully investigate all incidents of bullying. Dealing with bullying is made more difficult if the school is not informed as promptly as possible.
- We fully investigate all reports. There is a possibility that on investigation, we may determine that bullying is not in fact taking place. Regardless, we will follow up on all concerns to support students and families, as appropriate.



## **APPENDIX 3**

### **ADVICE TO STUDENTS**

What to do if you are the victim of bullying:

- If you are concerned that another student is demonstrating behaviour towards you that you think is bullying/could lead to bullying, you could try one of the following approaches to try to diffuse the situation:
  - Say 'No!' firmly
  - Act confidently even when you don't feel it
  - Where appropriate/possible, walk away when the bully approaches you
  - Give a smart reply to surprise or disarm the other student
  - Use a routine response (e.g. okay, whatever) that implies that the you are not bothered
- If the bullying continues, you must:
  - Report this to the Wellbeing Coordinator, or another trusted member of staff, that you have been/or are being bullied
- You must not:
  - Bully back
  - Encourage other students to 'fight' back (verbally or physically)

What to do if you witness bullying or are worried that somebody else is being bullied:

- Report your concerns to the Wellbeing Coordinator, or another trusted member of staff
- If you are there when it happens, and it is safe to do so, tell the bully to stop. If you feel threatened or unsafe, report the incident to a member of staff immediately
- You must not:
  - 'Fight' back (verbally or physically) on behalf of the person being bullied or encourage other students to do so