



ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Our Own English High School, Al Ain takes seriously its obligation to ensure that pupils and 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 the duty to report an incident of bullying whether it happens to themselves or to other people. OOL 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.

OOL strives to be a community in which everybody feels valued and safe and where individual differences are accepted and regarded positively. Every student has the right to enjoy school. Bullying issues form a key part of the Wellbeing Program, along with assemblies, which is underpinned by the UAE Moral Education Program.

It is an individual's right and responsibility to take a stand on bullying, whether the victim is yourself or somebody else.

1. What is bullying?

Bullying is usually defined as behaviour by an individual or group, **repeated over time**, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms, including:

- Physical violence; punching, hitting and pushing
- Mocking, ridiculing or tormenting somebody
- Offensive, racist name-calling or using any obviously hurtful names
- Gossiping and spreading rumors
- Exclusion, deliberately ignoring someone and encouraging others to do the same
- Insulting someone
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour
- Taking and damaging property
- Offensive telephone calls, emails and text messages to others

Bullying may also be racial, regarding someone's religion, belief or culture, related to a person's home circumstances/family or related to a person's age, disability, special educational needs, learning difficulty, health or appearance.

A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Where this is the case, staff should report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Leads who will contact the relevant authority, if deemed necessary.

Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, the School may consider drawing on a range of counseling service to support the student who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Signs and Symptoms

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

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school bus
- 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 do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (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 device

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. This is not an exhaustive list and children may display other behaviours that appear out of their character.

OOL Designated Safeguarding Leads:

- **Dr. Savithri Das:** Savithri.e.ool@gemsedu.com who can be contacted on 03-7679747 Ext. 226 during school hours.
- **Mr. Rocky Miller, Principal:** who can be contacted on 03-7679747 Ext. 214 during school hours.

Purpose of policy

At OOL, we are committed to the wellbeing of all our children and providing a caring, friendly and safe environment so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. The purpose of this Anti-Bullying policy is to nurture a school ethos where bullying is considered unacceptable and to promote a whole school community approach to prevent bullying and ensure a safe school environment.

2. Aims and Objectives

- To equip all members of the school community with an understanding of what bullying is.
- To equip all children with safe and acceptable methods of standing up for themselves in an assertive manner.
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community with regards to awareness of and action taken if and when bullying occurs.
- To provide a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying.
- To produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.
- To promote clear procedures of how incidents of bullying are dealt with.

3. What is Cyberbullying?

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, unauthorized publication of private images, manipulation or peer rejection.

Breaking the Cybercrime Law – Federal Law No.5. Students need to be aware that any incidences of cyberbullying, which contravene the Federal Law of the U.A.E., may be subject immediately to Permanent Exclusion.

There are many different methods by which cyberbullying takes place. The following list is not exhaustive; while the development of information and communications technology is so rapid new styles of cyberbullying are emerging constantly. Moreover, young people are particularly adept at adapting to new technology.

The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Twitter
- SMS (Short Message Service) also known as Text Message sent through devices
- Instant Message (via devices, email provider services, apps, and social media messaging features)
- Email

E-safety assemblies are built into the focus of the month programme. Student counselor explores the topic further to school to address students and teachers as well as parent forums.

4. Actions for those being bullied

Who can you turn to if you are bullied?

- Your parents
- Your close friends
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Student Counselor
- Any member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Any teacher with whom you feel you have a relationship of trust
- The School Nurse

What can you yourself do if you are bullied?

- Tell the bully to stop. Make it clear that the behavior is unwelcome and hurtful.
- Seek help. Talk to someone you trust.

- Approach student wellbeing ambassadors of your respective house.
- Report it to either to the teacher present at the scenario and Student Counselor. OOL 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 take action, 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.

5. Preventing Bullying

What can you do to prevent bullying?

We will raise awareness through an ongoing whole school focus on what bullying is, the roles and responsibilities of those involved and strategies the children can use if they feel they are being bullied.

- This will be communicated through:
 - Teaching and learning programmes
 - Assemblies
 - Whole Class Circle Time
 - Group/individual discussions
 - Active supervision
 - Awareness of digital citizenship and acceptable use of ICT policy that children are required to sign prior to use
 - Clear and explicit standards set by teachers and students in their individual classrooms and across all areas of the school
 - Peer support- student leadership team
 - Children encouraged to report bullying (including observers) and given clear options as to who they can approach including staff, parents and senior students
 - Student-led initiatives
 - Parent involvement Other bullying prevention activities at our school will include:
 - Annual surveys and self-review of student wellbeing at the school
 - An action plan based on issues identified as part of self-review
 - Professional learning and development

Roles and responsibilities - The role of children

♣ Children are encouraged to use the strategy 'Stop-Walk-Talk'. This strategy and related programme works to empower students by teaching them problem solving skills, positive behaviours and bully prevention techniques that are manageable and sustainable.

Students will focus on identifying problem behaviours and strategies to deal with them as well as whom to go to in the school if a problem occurs.

- Respect yourself and others.
- Try to create a relaxed atmosphere in school for everybody.
- Do not follow friends when you disagree with what they are doing.
- Learn to be tolerant and broad-minded and to rejoice in individual differences.
- Be aware of the school's anti bullying policy and give it your full support.

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6. Assurances about Bullying

What assurances can the school provide on bullying?

- We take a zero-tolerance stance.
- We expect a high standard of behavior at all times.
- We aim to provide a safe and caring environment for everybody.
- We have a policy for detecting, preventing and dealing with bullying.
- We have a pastoral care system that provides genuine support to students which includes but is not limited to restorative justice sessions and peer support.

. Equal Opportunities The school recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve, a diverse school community which includes people from differing backgrounds, with different skills and abilities. The school will take positive steps to create school culture through its governing body, managers and other employees, in which people can feel confident of being treated with fairness, dignity and tolerance, irrespective of their individual differences. This commitment extends to the whole school community and others connected with it. The school is committed to the elimination of unlawful discrimination and to the promotion of good relations between all.

What assurances can the teachers provide on bullying?

- If you have been bullied you are not to blame.
- Nobody deserves to be bullied.
- Everyone is entitled to enjoy school.
- Staying silent solves nothing.
- “We are here to help!”

How can parents help?

- Show a real interest in your child’s social life and in school events
- Encourage your child to have friends’ round, to join clubs and to be tolerant and broad-minded towards others.
- Build up your child’s self-esteem by emphasizing positive features and accepting individual characteristics.
- Discuss the school’s anti-bullying policy with your child and suggest positive strategies if his/her rights are abused.
- Do not tell your child that bullying is part of growing up or imply that it is in any way acceptable.
- Encourage your child to act on bullying by reporting, but do not tell him/her to

retaliate either physically or with name-calling.

- Show an example by being firm but positive and not aggressive in your approach to discipline.
- Confront the possibility that your child may be a bully. If the school contacts you suggesting that your child may have been involved in bullying, try not to go on the defensive or to find excuses for the bullying behaviour. Work constructively with the school to find a solution to the issue.
- **If your child is being bullied, please report it; the school can then take action.**

What disciplinary structures exist to deal with incidents of bullying?

Warning (Level 1):

If a student starts to behave in a manner which could develop into or be interpreted as bullying, wherever possible a warning will be given (Level 1). In this way, it is hoped that many potentially serious situations will not escalate.

However, the warning stage is at the discretion of the school, and a student involved in a serious instance of bullying will bypass this stage and be placed onto the relevant scale of OOL Code of Conduct.

Level 2

Where, after due investigations, the school has determined that bullying has occurred, it will be explained to the bully why his/her behaviour is unacceptable, and positive strategies will be pursued to raise his self-esteem as well as to protect the victim. The bully's parents will be informed by letter. Referral to Behavior Modification Centre (BMC) would be done to make the bully reflect on his/her behavior.

However, this is entirely at the discretion of the school, and any student previously on Level 2 who is involved in a further instance of bullying will be placed directly on to Level 3.

Level 3 (SLT)

If the bullying continues, arrangements will be made to minimise contact between bully and victim. The bully's parents will be called into school to discuss the situation. The bully will sign a statement promising that the bullying will not be repeated.

Level 4 (Internal/External Exclusion)

Where there is no improvement in the bullying, the bully will be excluded (temporarily suspended) from the school for at least 2-3 days. This may be internal or external depending on the severity of the case along with prior history of such behaviour

Level 4 (Permanent Exclusion)

As a last resort, and when it is clear that the bully consistently endangers the welfare of fellow members of the school community, he or she will be permanently excluded from OOL.

Review of Policy

The bullying policy is monitored by SLT and reviewed on an annual basis.

Policy Details	
Last review	April 2024
Next review	April 2025
Responsible Reviewer	SLT & Counselor