

The American School in London

Definition of Bullying

Bullying at the American School in London is defined as any type of verbal or physical abuse against another student, which is repeated and purposeful. The underlying purpose of this type of behavior is always to humiliate or hurt someone else. A bullied person is one who is repeatedly exposed to negative action by one or more persons. Bullying can include, but is not necessarily limited to the following categories and specific behaviors in person, on line or on the phone: verbal bullying, threatening, social exclusion, physical bullying, vandalism, extortion or theft.¹ See overleaf for further descriptions of these categories and behaviors.

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to talk to an adult they trust and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Bystanders need to understand how they contribute to bullying. Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

The Objectives of this Policy are:

- To assure the entire school community knows what the school policy is on bullying and what to do if it arises,
- To make it clear that, as a school, we take bullying seriously, and to assure students and parents will be supported when bullying is reported,
- To establish and maintain a clear norm that bullying will not be tolerated,
- To provide students with prevention and intervention strategies to help them stay safe within school and in the community at large.

Procedures

We expect anyone who knows that bullying is happening to tell a trusted adult in the school. This trusted adult will, in turn, seek solutions from the Assistant Principals, School Counselors or Principal. Each division will determine individual responses and consequences of bullying.

¹ Though it is not explicitly stated here, the School recognizes that in our modern age, many of these forms of bullying can take place electronically, either through email or online encounters or through texts and instant-messaging systems.

Bullying Categories and Specific Behaviors

Verbal Bullying

- Name-calling, teasing.
- Making fun of or being disrespectful of another person's: a) physical characteristics, b) nationality, c) religion, d) color, e) size, f) sexual orientation, g) physical disabilities, h) family problems (i.e. divorce), i) ability to learn, or j) athletic ability.
- Using inappropriate language (i.e. swearing).
- Spreading lies or rumors about a person.
- Laughing at another's misfortune.
- Inciting others to fight or bully someone in any way.
- Putting people down.

Threatening

- Saying that someone will be beaten up if they do not comply with the bully's requests.
- Using antagonistic language towards someone (i.e. saying things like, "I don't like the way you're looking at me!").

Social Exclusion

- Not allowing someone to play with or participate in your group.
- Forming a circle or group on the playground or in the hallways so that another person cannot join in.
- Speaking with a group so that one person is excluded either because of the language or slang being used by a group.
- Ignoring a person.
- Refusing to be someone's friend or a group pressuring others to isolate someone or exclude them as a friend.
- Refusing to allow someone her or his place in a line or on a bus.

Physical Bullying

- Pushing or shoving someone, hitting someone, poking or jabbing someone with hands or fingers or objects such as pencils or sticks.
- Grabbing someone's clothes (i.e. taking off someone's hat and throwing it down or giving it to someone else or grabbing a person's clothes with the intent to tear them).
- Fighting.

Vandalism

- Damaging someone's books or locker.
- Breaking someone's pencils, pens or art supplies.
- Writing on someone's notebook or binder.

Extortion or Theft

- Taking someone's lunch money.
- Taking someone else's lunch.
- Taking or hiding something that belongs to someone else.