

## Secondary Anti-bullying Policy

### Rationale

Berlin British School aims to be a welcoming, supportive community where everyone feels safe and comfortable to learn and work. Respectful communication and interaction with others is paramount. We believe in equality for all and do not tolerate discrimination against or anti-social behaviour towards people due to their nationality, race, religion or belief, gender or sexual orientation. We aim at fostering a respectful environment at school that encourages healthy online communication as well and aims to prevent forms of cyberbullying.

### Objectives

- Everyone should feel comfortable to come to school without feeling afraid or expecting intimidation.
- Students with different learning needs are treated with respect.
- Students and staff from different backgrounds are treated equally, with respect for the diverse experiences and skills they bring to our community.
- Students, parents and staff should be familiar with procedures about what to do if they feel worried, intimidated or hurt by the behaviour of others.
- We promote a *positive intervention bystander* culture.
- Bullying or anti-social behaviour is not tolerated by our community.
- Students should feel that their concerns are taken seriously and action will be taken to help resolve unacceptable situations.

### What is bullying?

Bullying is when an individual or group deliberately hurts another or makes them feel unhappy or unsafe. Bullying behaviour will be repeated over a period of time and is difficult for the victim to defend against. Bullying may be racist, sexist, or homophobic. People can be bullied for any reason; because of the way they look, because of their religion, their age, or because of a learning or physical disability for example.

Bullying is a blight on the lives of our children which inhibits full participation in education and learning, cultural, social and leisure activities. Whatever the reason, bullying is never acceptable and will not be tolerated in school.

## What can bullying look like?

Bullying can be physical, verbal, direct or indirect.

### General:

- Physical aggression, damage to property.
- Name calling, jealousy and deliberate personal criticism.
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidation, name belittling and gestures.
- Graffiti, sniggering, sarcastic remarks and extortion.
- Intimidation, name belittling, gestures.
- Degrading remarks or non-verbal reference regarding body shape.
- Putting down a student for working well and achieving.
- Talking deliberately loudly so that the victim can hear negative comments about themselves.
- Intimidation via invasion of personal space.
- Abusing social network sites.

### Physical:

- Causing bodily harm to another student
- Purposefully damaging the property of a student
- Inappropriate touching of another student
- Aggressive physical actions toward another student that are designed to humiliate or ridicule

### Verbal:

- Using an offensive term towards another student
- Calling another student names that belittle that student
- Making sarcastic comments

### Homophobic / Gender related

- Name calling /using graffiti.
- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation or gender identity.

### Racial

- Discrimination or prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background.

Relational which involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

- Whispering in company so as to exclude another.
- Malicious gossip.
- Isolation & exclusion.
- Ignoring, turning others against a student.
- Excluding from the group.
- Deliberate manipulation to take someone's friends away.

### Cyber

- Silent mobile phone calls.
- Abusive mobile phone calls.
- Abusive comments / pictures on social media, or abusive text messages.
- Video recording / taking pictures and sharing online without the person's permission.
- Creating sites about a particular person.
- Spreading rumours.

## Sexual

- Unwelcome sexual comments or touching.
- Unwelcome sexual texts, messages or emails.
- Sending unwelcome sexually explicit content to others.

## Indicators of bullying

It is important to look for changes in behaviour that may indicate that a student is feeling uncomfortable or unsafe in school, such as:

- Low mood
- Heightened anxiety
- Easily upset or seeming very sensitive
- Frequent or patterned absence or leaving school early on a regular basis
- Complaints of illness such as headaches, stomach aches, with no obvious cause
- Change in attitude towards studying / participation in class / changes in average performance
- Increased defensive / aggressive behaviour
- Missing books, homework or personal items
- Signs of excessive tiredness
- Withdrawal from others
- Signs of physical harm

## Prevention Strategies

- Action steps visible around school and frequently referred to so everyone knows how to report concerning situations.
- Promotion of a positive intervention bystander culture by people speaking out collectively when they see or hear about unacceptable behaviour towards others
- Active listening to anyone who raises an issue
- Key 'go to' people who are always available to listen: Form Tutors, Form Prefects, Ms Ferreiro, Ms Thomas, Ms Folan, Mr McFadden, Mr Coutts
- Collecting evidence of bullying: witness accounts, several people on the same social media platform taking screenshots of unacceptable messages or images online, asking family members to photograph these using a different device. This is to be completed by form tutors or key stage coordinators.
- Concerns about student welfare or requests to monitor the behaviour of particular students are made by staff via the student of concern tracking system and weekly meetings to build up a bigger picture of the situation and link individual incidents
- Promoting the '3 questions' restorative justice approach to help students deal with social difficulties, where these are *not* identified as bullying situations
- Promoting positive relationship education through form time and PSHE, so students can identify healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Up to date knowledge of staff of social media dangers and the promotion of this with parents
- Open communication channels with parents
- Zero tolerance of racist / homophobic / sexist comments or name calling
- Zero tolerance of 'put downs' or laughing in the classroom when students answer questions or give opinions

- Meetings with parents to raise concerns or as a disciplinary measure
- New students are particularly monitored by form tutors and form prefects
- Clubs are promoted at lunchtimes to give students welcoming spaces among others who share their interests

### **Action steps (directed to students and visible around school)**

- Speak up when you see or hear of people who are not being treated with respect in school. If you witness this, take positive action to support the person who is being attacked.
- Collect evidence:
  - Who else saw or heard the behaviour?
  - Write down what happened, when and where.
  - If online, either take a screenshot and ask other people in the social media group to also do the same; or use a different device (eg ask a family member) to take a photo of the screen. Some social media platforms use disappearing messages or show who has taken screen shots.
- Always report what is happening:
  - Arrange to speak to, or write to, a teacher or trusted older student or family member. You can do this in confidence.
  - You will not have to confront the person who is bullying you yourself, unless you feel this is the best course of action.
- Remember that we all have the right to feel safe and comfortable in school and to be treated with respect.

### **Sanctions: Order of Escalation (can be amended if the severity of the offence requires it to be - eg straight to head of school)**

- Form teacher, involving a conversation with students involved in the instance of an isolated episode. Warning of more serious consequences if behaviour continues. Could involve being placed on report to monitor more closely.
- Key stage coordinator / head of school- if the bullying persists, or is something of a more serious nature then it needs to be escalated quickly.
- Sanctions include detentions, parent meeting, being placed on report, finally internal/external suspension (fixed or permanent). The sanctions are determined by the nature of the offence, and not necessarily all required.

### **Responsibilities of Students:**

- Be respectful towards other students, staff and members of the school community.
- Participate in sessions regarding the school's anti-bullying policy and other sessions regarding behaviour expectations.
- Report any concerning incidents immediately.
- Support peers in reporting incidents.
- Learn to be a positive intervention bystander, so that bullying and harassment are discouraged through peer influence.

### **Responsibilities of staff:**

- Foster positive relationships with students.
- Establish, maintain, make explicit and model the school's expectations related to bullying.
- Support students to be positive intervention bystanders.

- Respond to reported incidents as soon as possible.
- Keep open communication between student, parents and the school regarding the progress of the case.
- Keep the appropriate documentation of the report.
- Ensure that follow up of students occurs after the report has been resolved.

**Responsibilities of parents:**

- Provide support for their child to report incidences as soon as possible. Where possible, support students in collecting evidence eg by taking photos of inappropriate posts online.
- Communicate in a respectful manner with school staff regarding their concerns.
- Initial point of contact for concerns is the Form Tutor, followed by the Head of School if needed.

*January 2021 Working Group: AH, EF, SL, LG, ET*