



Seisen International School

K-12 Anti-Bullying Policy

Overview

At Seisen International School (SIS), we believe that each student has the right to a safe and healthy school environment - an environment where all students are allowed to share their ideas, their likes and dislikes, and be themselves.

We recognise that children and adolescents are vulnerable to and capable of bullying their peers. This includes verbal, emotional, physical, and sexual bullying, which can take place online and offline. Bullying will not be tolerated or passed off as part of “banter” or “growing up.” We are committed to a whole school approach to ensure the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of bullying within our school community.

Age and its effect on a student’s ability to understand the concept of bullying, as well as what is considered developmentally typical social challenges and behaviours, must be taken into account.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying:

- can be intentional or unintentional. According to UNESCO, “Not all perpetrators of bullying act intentionally. Students involved in bullying may do it as a result of group dynamics rather than because they want to harm the student who is targeted.”¹
- is repeated or threatened-to-be-repeated behaviours, where it is hard for the target to defend themselves (in other words - the perpetrator has the power).
- is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviours that cause physical, social and/or psychological harm.
- can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. These bullying behaviours may be different in nature while repeatedly targeting the same person(s).
- infringes on the rights and wellbeing of the target.

The above is not an exhaustive list of bullying behaviours.

¹ “International Conference on School Bullying: Recommendations by the Scientific Committee on Preventing and Addressing School Bullying and Cyberbullying.” *UNESCO*; Ministère de l’éducation nationale, de la jeunesse et des sports, June 2020, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374794>.

At SIS, we do not tolerate bullying on the basis of:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| - Academic performance | - Gender | - Preferences or interests |
| - Age | - Gender expression | - Race |
| - Body or appearance | - Gender identity | - Religious beliefs |
| - Disability/illness | - Language | - Socioeconomic status |
| - Ethnicity | - Learning differences | - Sexuality |
| - Family or personal background | - Mental and physical disability/illness | |

***This list is not exhaustive.

Vulnerable Groups

We recognise that all children can be at risk, however, we acknowledge that some groups are more vulnerable. This can include those who: have low self-esteem and experience wellbeing issues; experience abuse within their family; live with domestic violence; have special educational needs and/or disabilities; identify or are perceived as LGBTQIA+; experience socio-economic challenges.

Bullying is not:

- single episodes of conflict or fights between equals in person or online messaging
- single episodes of social rejection/exclusion or dislike
- individuals not being friends
- single acts of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- mutual arguments, disagreements or fights
- consensual teasing during play or play fighting

While these actions can cause distress, they do not fall within this definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to: catfishing, doxxing, posting hateful comments (e.g. wishing harm, name-calling, use of inappropriate language, etc.), pictures, videos or audio, harassing, insulting, antagonizing, threatening others or uploading images or videos of others without their permission. Liking, commenting, sharing or reacting (with emojis) to these types of posts is also contributing to the act of cyberbullying.

In addition, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site, public forum, or group chat where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people could be regarded as bullying behaviour. This can be considered an instance of cyberbullying due to the nature of how information can be transmitted over the internet without consent.

Isolated or once-off incidents of negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful one-to-one text message or other private messaging, do not fall within this definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate.

At SIS, all students are required to sign the [Acceptable Use Policy](#) each year which explains this further.

Roles

Perpetrator

The perpetrator, or person exhibiting bullying behaviour, is the person(s) who is intentionally or unintentionally causing harm to the target. They are the one(s) with the power in the relationship. It is possible for the perpetrator to also be a target of bullying.

Target

The target is the person(s) who is experiencing physical, social and/or psychological harm perpetrated by the perpetrator. They are the one(s) with less or no power in the relationship. It is possible for the target to also be a perpetrator of bullying.

Bystander

The bystander is the person who is aware of or a witness to the bullying and does not intervene or attempt at getting help for the situation, rather they passively stand by while the bullying is allowed to continue.

Upstander

The upstander is the person who is aware of or a witness to the bullying and does something to intervene or get help for the situation; they stand up for the target and do not allow the bullying to continue.

Responsibilities

Students

Students have a responsibility to:

- Be aware of and support the SIS anti-bullying policy
- Respect others, treat others how they want to be treated
- Think before you act
- Report any bullying you see, or are aware of, via one or more ways (even if it involves people from other schools):
 - Speak directly to, write a note, or email a teacher, counselor, principal, parent or other trusted adult
 - Fill in the Komodo wellbeing survey
 - Complete the [anonymous reporting form](#) (in Middle School and High School)
- Report if you are bullied or are experiencing harmful or hurtful behaviour
- Stand up for the targets of bullying
- Do not support or go along with bullying behaviour

Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians have a responsibility to:

- Be aware of and support the SIS anti-bullying policy
- Be a positive role model by modeling and encouraging respect for others, and follow the parent profile

- Listen to your child and take their feelings seriously
- Watch for early warning signs of bullying
- Inform the school of any incidents of bullying that you are aware of (including students other than your own child) promptly
- Not directly approach the parents of other students, or the student, involved in bullying incidents
- Teach your child to interact and solve problems in a positive manner
- When your child is the target of bullying, remind them that reporting is important and they have a right to feel safe
- When your child is identified as the perpetrator or bystander, recognize the seriousness of the issue and support the school

Teachers

- Watch for early warning signs and concerning behaviours
- Monitor Komodo wellbeing data to identify and follow up with students possibly affected by bullying.
- Be vigilant in classes but also in common areas to ensure bullying is not happening
- Be aware of language and content being taught to students in PSPE/PSHE curriculum and raise awareness through homeroom, advisory, and class time.
- Report any incidents of bullying or behaviours that could be perceived as bullying to the principal within 24 hours, but not to investigate unless requested to further by the principal.
- Do not promise confidentiality to the student or parents/guardians as the concern may need to be shared further with the child protection office or counselor.
- Fill in the “Student Concerns Form” on Veracross anytime you notice issues related to academic, health, social, emotional, and behavioral concerns.
- Where the disclosure includes an online element, staff will not view or forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably the CPO) is present.

Counselors

- Advocate on behalf of the parties involved
- Facilitate conversations amongst parties involved and leadership team members
- Monitor Komodo wellbeing data to identify and follow up with students possibly affected by bullying
- Ensure that bullying is addressed in the PSPE/PSHE curriculum

Leadership Team

- Be an empathetic, fair, and respectful leader to all parties involved and work to create a caring school atmosphere.
- Ensure the anti-bullying policy is implemented.
- Monitor Komodo wellbeing data to identify and follow up with students possibly affected by bullying
- Support teachers and staff in dealing with bullying issues.
- Carry out prompt investigations and resolutions to bullying incidents.
- Provide support and strategies for both targets and perpetrators.
- Inform parents and guardians when children are involved in bullying incidents.
- Document all incidents of bullying.
- Leadership team will take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.

- The Head of School will contact appropriate authorities (e.g. local police, Child Guidance Center, etc.) when deemed necessary

Reporting

Parents/guardians need to trust and work in partnership with the school in the best interest of their child. Parents/guardians are asked to report any potential bullying incidents directly to the school immediately. This can be done by speaking personally to a staff member at school, through email, or by phone call to the Principal's office. All reports of bullying will be investigated.

Students are asked to report any potential bullying incidents to the school immediately. If a student feels they have experienced or witnessed peer-on-peer abuse, by a student at SIS or another international school, there are several routes through which this can be reported:

- Students can share their concerns via in-person conversations, e-mail, or Komodo check-ins, with any trusted adult - a teacher, counselor, nurse, principal, assistant principal, coach, parent, etc. SIS faculty and staff will then follow the correct reporting protocol as laid out in the Student Safeguarding Policy Handbook.
- Middle School & High School Students are also able to make an anonymous report through the "Anonymous Reporting Form." This can also be used to report incidents between students at Seisen or between students at other international schools. Results from this form are received by the Head of School, who then disseminates information to relevant administrators.

Note:

Reports can be made for current or past incidents, as well as incidents that have occurred online or outside of school.

Responding to Reports

All reports of bullying will be handled on a case-by-case basis with the Child Protection Officer (CPO), or counselors taking a leading role using their professional judgment, supported by the divisional leadership team. The safeguarding team and other services, such as Child Guidance Center (CGC) or the police may be involved, as required. There is no time limit for when reports can be made; reports can be made regarding instances from the distant past, more recent, and instances that may still be occurring.

Support for Target

The school will take all disclosures/reports seriously and will reassure the target that they will be supported and kept safe. We will consider the wishes of the target in terms of how they want to proceed and the choices that are available to them to ensure that their wellbeing and safety is protected. Faculty and staff will not promise confidentiality as the initial concern may need to be shared further with the child protection office or counselor. If the initial report was not made to the counselor, the target will be offered the chance to meet with the counselor to receive social-emotional support.

Investigation

Following any report of alleged bullying, an investigation will take place that may include, but is not limited to the following approaches:

- A team will be assembled to investigate the report. Depending on the situation, members can include the Division Principal, Division Assistant Principal, Social-Emotional Counselor, Child Protection Officer, Assistant Child Protection Officer, and other relevant adults
- Interviews conducted separately with with alleged perpetrator, alleged target, bystanders, and upstanders
- Evidence gathering from alleged perpetrator, alleged target, bystanders, and upstanders.

Consequences, Solutions and Next Steps

Following any report, and depending on the outcome of the investigation, possible consequences and solutions include, but are not limited to:

In situations where it is determined that bullying has not taken place:

- Inform all parties involved of the result of investigation
- Support students with interpersonal relationships moving forward
- Ensure that group agreements are being kept (in the case of mutual disagreements)

In situations where it is determined that bullying has taken place, students may be recommended for the following services based on severity of the situation and results of investigation:

- Restorative justice based discussion facilitated by a faculty member between students involved
- In-school counseling services (working with students on aspects of the student profile)
- Referral to external counseling, testing or services
- Referral to Leadership Team, including divisional assistant principal and principal
- Referral to the Head of School
- Parent guardian notification and/or parent/guardian meeting (Sharing expectations with students and parents)
- Monitoring interactions in academic and social settings
- Removal from activities and/or exclusion from future activities
- Separating students in subsequent classes
- Instructions to teachers on grouping strategies
- Development of behavioural plan which can be created in conjunction with perpetrator with intent to reflect on actions and improve behaviour moving forward
- Restorative reflection(s) discussing possible logical consequences may occur with the Principal and/or Assistant Principal. Restitution (the student making an effort to repair the harm caused) can be a logical consequence.
- Suspension from school: Before a student is readmitted to school, parents must meet with the principal and/or Head of School
- If behavioural plan is not followed, perpetrator may be asked to disenroll from Seisen International School

As an international school, it is not our practice to elicit apologies from students or parents due to culturally sensitive approaches to apologizing. Should an individual be ready to give a meaningful and heartfelt apology this will be encouraged.

Glossary

- Bystanders: a person who is aware or present at an event or incident but does not take part.
- Upstander: a person who speaks up in support of an individual and/or who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied.
- Catfishing: the process of luring someone into a relationship by means of a fictional online persona.
- Doxxing: publish someone's private or identifying information on the internet with the intent to harm and/or humiliate the person

Legislation in Japan with Regards to Bullying

There are several pieces of legislation in Japan which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- [Act on the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Bullying](#)
- [Penal Code Chapter XXXIV Crimes against Reputation](#)
 - Defamation
 - Insults
- [Japanese Constitution, Article 11-13](#)
- [The Basic Policies for the Prevention, etc. of Bullying](#) from MEXT
- [Act on Prevention of Damage Caused by Provision of Private Image Records](#)
- [Civil Code Section 6 Chapter V Torts](#)
- [UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)