

The American School in London

Anti-bullying Policy

The current version of any policy, procedure, protocol or guideline is the version held on the ASL website. It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that they are following the most up-to-date version.

Responsible party	Designated Safeguarding lead
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Approval date	October 2024
Next review date	October 2026

Anti-bullying Policy

Definition of bullying

At the American School in London (ASL), bullying is defined as any type of verbal or physical abuse against another student, in person or online, which is repeated and purposeful. The School recognizes that in our modern age, many of these forms of bullying can take place electronically, for example through email, social media platforms or texts and instant-messaging systems. The underlying purpose of this type of behavior is always to demean, 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: verbal bullying, threatening, social exclusion, physical bullying, sexual harassment, vandalism, extortion or theft.

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, respectful, inclusive 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 is a serious safeguarding concern. It hurts and impacts a student's ability to engage fully in the life of the School. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and to be accepted for who they are. Students who bully others need to understand the impact of their behavior, develop appropriate ways of behaving, and are expected to be part of a restorative process. Bystanders need to understand how they contribute to bullying. The courage to act is one of ASL's core values and everyone has a responsibility to help ensure bullying does not happen in our school. The School has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure that the entire school community knows what the school policy is on bullying and what to do if it occurs;
- To make it clear that, as a school, we take bullying seriously, and to assure students and parents that we will take action when bullying is reported,
- To establish and maintain a school culture in which bullying will not be tolerated,
- To teach students about age-appropriate prevention and intervention strategies to help them and their peers stay safe within the school and in the community at large.
- To make sure students and families know who they can talk to if they are concerned that bullying is taking place

Procedures

We expect and encourage 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 safeguarding team, principals, assistant principals, school counselors. Each division will determine individual responses to support the bullied student and to

determine consequences of bullying as outlined in the Codes of Conduct for the [Lower](#), [Middle](#) and [High](#) Schools included in the respective divisions' Behavior policies. In addition to consequences, and if it is appropriate, our students will meet with the counselor or administrator after an incident to make amends, learn from the situation and restore their relationship.

Bullying categories and specific behaviors
(Please note these definitions are not an exhaustive list)

Verbal bullying

- Name-calling, teasing
- Making fun or being disrespectful of a person's physical characteristics, nationality, religion or beliefs, race, size, age, sexual orientation, physical disabilities, family make-up, ability to learn, athletic ability or any protected characteristic.
- 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
- Cyberbullying

Threatening (online or in person, directly or through others)

- 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 such as, "I don't like the way you're looking at me!")
- Threatening to spread or spreading rumors about someone's sexual orientation, identity or reputation

Social exclusion—some examples are:

- 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 as a group pressuring others to isolate

- someone or exclude someone as a friend
- Refusing to allow someone a 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
- Sexual harassment: such as grabbing bottoms, breasts or genitalia; flicking bras; and lifting up skirts. Please see our Code of Conduct and Safeguarding and Child Protection policies for more information

Vandalism

- Damaging someone's books, electronic device, phone or locker
- Breaking someone's pencils, pens or art supplies
- Writing on someone's notebook or binder
- Deliberately damaging someone's personal belongings

Extortion or theft

- Taking someone's lunch money
- Taking someone else's lunch or lunch card/ID
- Taking or hiding something that belongs to someone else
- Threatening someone if they don't pay

ASL takes these matters seriously and is committed to providing a caring, respectful, inclusive and safe environment for all of our students. If you have concerns please reach out to a member of the [safeguarding team](#).