



Europese School Den Haag

# ANTI BULLYING PROTOCOL

# Anti Bullying Protocol

*ESH Secondary School*

*Version January 2025*

## Table of Contents

1. Preface .....	2
2. Definition of bullying.....	3
3. Types of bullying .....	3
4. Parties involved in a case of bullying .....	4
5. Safeguarding .....	5
6. Prevention.....	5
7. Protocol of action step by step .....	6

## 1. Preface

At the European School of The Hague (ESH), we are dedicated to fostering a safe and inclusive environment, rooted in respect, ambition, and positivity, for all students and staff. Our Positive Behaviour Policy guides our commitment to supporting the well-being and growth of our community by actively promoting positive actions and by addressing all forms of misbehavior, including bullying, through a leveled approach.

ESH maintains a zero-tolerance stance on bullying to ensure that all students feel secure and valued. We strive to create an environment where everyone can thrive academically and socially without fear of intimidation or harm. Our Anti-Bullying Protocol is designed to prevent and address bullying proactively, integrating structured interventions that align with our Positive Behaviour Policy. Through this document and the Positive Behaviour Policy, ESH outlines its approach to preventing and addressing bullying behaviours, with the goal of not only stopping negative actions but also restoring positive, supportive relationships within our school community. Together, we create a space where students can learn, grow, and confidently become the future citizens of Europe and the world.

## 2. Definition of bullying

It's important to distinguish bullying from isolated or one-off incidents that do not fit within its definition. While bullying involves a pattern of repeated, intentional harm within a power imbalance, isolated actions—such as a single negative or hurtful comment or message—do not qualify as bullying. These behaviours, when they occur as singular incidents, will be addressed according to the school's Positive Behaviour policy to ensure accountability and support for respectful interactions. However, if a single offensive or hurtful message, image, or statement is shared publicly—such as on a social media platform or other public forum—where it can be widely viewed, shared, or repeated by others, it may be considered bullying behaviour. This is because public exposure has the potential to amplify harm, creating a broader impact that resembles bullying in effect, even if it is a single occurrence.

## 3. Types of bullying

### 1. Physical Bullying

Involves using physical force to intimidate or harm someone. Examples include hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, or damaging someone's belongings. Physical bullying is often the most visible type, as it involves direct physical contact or aggression.

### 2. Verbal Bullying

Involves using words to belittle, demean, or hurt another person. This can include name-calling, insults, teasing, threats, or hurtful comments about someone's appearance, abilities, or other personal traits. Verbal bullying can be just as damaging as physical bullying, even though it is less visible.

### 3. Social or Relational Bullying

Aimed at damaging someone's social relationships or reputation, often to isolate or exclude them. This form of bullying includes spreading rumors, encouraging others to reject or ignore someone, or publicly humiliating them. Social bullying can be subtle but has long-lasting effects on a person's self-esteem and social standing.

### 4. Cyberbullying

Occurs online or through digital communication channels, such as social media, messaging apps, or email. Cyberbullying can involve sending hurtful messages, sharing embarrassing photos, posting derogatory comments, or creating fake profiles to harass or impersonate someone. Cyberbullying is particularly harmful because it can be persistent, anonymous, widely shared, and difficult to control.

### 5. Psychological or Emotional Bullying

Involves manipulating or intimidating someone to instill fear, shame, or insecurity. This can include actions like gaslighting, excluding someone from a group, or using threatening body language. Psychological bullying can have severe impacts on a person's mental and emotional well-being, leading to anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.

Each form of bullying can have serious consequences, and it's not uncommon for multiple forms to occur simultaneously. By identifying and understanding these different types, the school can more effectively address and prevent bullying in all its forms.

## 4. Parties involved in a case of bullying

**The bullied pupil:** The victim of bullying, who often does not dare to share the situation with adults.

**The bullying pupil:** He or she (and sometimes a small group) leads the bullying actions, but is not the only aggressor.

**The bystanders:** Research has found that bystanders (witnesses in bullying situations) can mostly solve bullying problems, but actually intervene in less than 30% of all cases. The reasons for not intervening can be various. Some bystanders do not want to intervene in a bullying situation, because they actually sympathize with the bullies. One differentiates four groups of bystanders: assistants, reinforcers, outsiders and defenders. Assistants and reinforcers generally have a pro-bully attitude, while outsiders and defenders mostly hold a pro-victim attitude. Defenders are the ones actually protecting the victim and confronting the bully, while outsiders stay completely out of bullying situations<sup>2</sup>.

**The staff of the school:** When bullying happens, students tend to hide it from teachers and school's staff. That is why it is important to be attentive and record any type of conflict and report it to the anti-bullying coordinator. It might seem an isolated incident, but it could be part of a much more complex case. All members of staff are requested to register all incidents in Safeguarding.

**The mentor:** If a case of bullying happens in his/her group, the mentor will put in place the protocol to make sure bullying stops and to provide a safe place in class to all the students. The mentor will be the first contact person with parents. The mentor will be in contact with parents and will follow-up with parents and students, to make sure their mentees are feeling safe and the bullying has finished.

**The parents:** Parents know their children best, but sometimes secondary pupils do not want to share their problems with their parents, because they feel ashamed or guilty. It is important to always share with school any changes in children's behaviour or mood. We ask parents to keep an open mind when your child is being named in an incident of bullying. We understand that you might not experience this behaviour at home and we realize that there can be various reasons for a student to engage in these behaviours. Working together with the school can help prevent reoccurrence and together we can help our students to make different choices. Parent's main contact is their child's mentor, but the anti-bullying coordinator is available for questions or information.

**The anti-bullying coordinator:** The ESH has an anti-bullying coordinator, who has access to all incidents recorded by teachers in Safeguarding. This way, the anti-bullying coordinator can have an overview of what is happening in school with every child, and see if there is a pattern of bullying incidents regarding any students. The anti-bullying coordinator makes sure that the protocol is followed and that any case of bullying is controlled and ended. The anti-bullying coordinator is also responsible to guide and coach mentors in case of difficult situations. ESH's current anti-bullying coordinator is: tbc.

**The Student Support Team:** (May be involved for further bullying related support to students or families. They are also connected to a wide network of mental health professionals in case of a need for referral.

**Teamleaders and Senior Management of ESH:** In case of persistent bullying or when sanctions are necessary, the Team leaders and Head of school will decide the sanctions that are appropriate to each case, depending on the seriousness of the situation. Sanctions are given in alignment with the Positive Behaviour Policy (2024).

## 5. Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the module of EduKey's software suite used by ESH to record all incidents regarding bullying and safety of students. It is a confidential program in which all incidents have to be recorded. The Designated Safeguarding Leads receive all safeguarding reports and will add the Anti-bullying coordinator and respective mentors to bullying related incidents. This way, the anti-bullying coordinator can, on the one hand, observe a pattern of incidents and help prevent cases of bullying from developing and on the other hand, oversee what steps are being followed in order to solve a case of bullying at school.

All mentors and teachers, as well as members of staff, have to be familiar with this program and are asked to record every bullying incident that they witness or that has been communicated with them. An incident that might look like a one-off, could be part of a pattern. Only by recording them all, can we have a real idea of what is going on among our pupils.

## 6. Prevention

It is important to work on prevention, and this is why several action points will happen throughout every single school year.

- Before the school year starts for our pupils, time will be allocated to transfer information from old mentors, Team leaders and the anti-bullying coordinator to the new mentors. All mentors will be informed about any cases of bullying that have happened previously. This way, any simple incident will be taken in the appropriate context from the first day of school for our pupils.
- Mentors will focus on getting to know each other and group dynamics in the first weeks of school. They will touch base on the topic of bullying, set expectations, and discuss relevant procedures and protocols from Esh documents.
- The support team will be working one to one with students that require bullying related support.

## 7. Protocol of action step by step

	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Record keeping and Data</b>
<b>Step 1:</b>  <b>Initial Reporting and Mentor Intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A bullying incident is reported by a member of staff in Edukey,</li> <li>• The safeguarding leads add the mentor(s) of the involved students (both the victim and the alleged bully/bullies) and the Anti-Bullying Coordinator to the report.</li> <li>• The Anti-Bullying Coordinator takes over coordination, ensuring necessary steps are followed and coaching mentors through the protocol. Relevant mentors collaborate for effective communication.</li> <li>• Together with the Anti- Bullying coordinator, the mentors discuss initial intervention strategies and determine how best to approach the affected students.</li> <li>• Mentors or Anti-bullying coordinator communicate with parents about the incidents.</li> </ul>	<p><b>By Mentors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Meeting with the Victim:</i> The mentor meets privately with the victim to gather information, offer reassurance, and emphasize that the school prioritizes their safety.</li> <li>• <i>Meeting with the Alleged Bully(ies):</i> A mentor meeting of an investigative and educational nature is held with the alleged bully(ies) to outline behavioral expectations. Written agreements encourage positive behavior, with a follow-up period scheduled for 4-6 weeks.</li> <li>• Inform select staff to remain vigilant for any related behaviour or incidents if appropriate, necessary or helpful.</li> </ul> <p><b>By Mentor or Anti-bullying Coordinator</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Parent Communication:</i> Both the victim’s and bully(ies)’s parents are informed by email or in person depending on the situation and time restrictions. This will contain an overview of the situation, the intervention steps, and expectations going forward. The email is sent Anti Bullying coordinator or mentor depending on the availability of the Anti-bullying coordinator. Both are included in communication.</li> <li>• A follow-up meeting may be planned with parents involved.</li> </ul> <p><b>By Teamleader</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If legal concerns arise, school management may inform parents/carers of their rights to report.</li> </ul>	<p>All meetings, decisions, and involved parties are documented in the Safeguarding report by the involved staff members.</p>
<b>Ongoing Monitoring and Check-ins (Weeks 1-4)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular Mentor Check-Ins: During weekly mentor lessons, the mentor(s) conduct brief check-ins with both the victim and the bully(ies) to monitor progress and address any new concerns.</li> <li>• Formal Follow-Up after 4 weeks: If there are no issues in interim check-ins, the mentor(s) conduct a comprehensive follow-up meeting with the students involved to assess adherence to behavioral expectations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>By Mentor:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mentor communicates fortnightly or when the need arises with the parents of the victim and perpetrator to report on developments and ensure continued support.</li> <li>• The mentor communicates an end evaluation after the Formal follow up.</li> </ul>	<p>All meetings, decisions, and involved parties are documented in the Safeguarding report by the involved staff members.</p>
<b>Step 2:</b>  <b>Escalation if Bullying Continues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If bullying behavior persists, a school management member leads a formal meeting with the bully and their parents.</li> </ul>	<p><b>By Mentor:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents/Carers are informed of reoccurring incidents and are invited in for a meeting with the</li> </ul>	<p>Documentation and Updated Plan: The mentor logs all actions in the Safeguarding system and updates the Anti-</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to the Positive Behaviour Policy, appropriate measures, such as time-out sessions, reflection assignments, or loss of privileges, are implemented to reinforce accountability and foster empathy.</li> <li>A behaviour agreement is set up.</li> <li>The Anti-Bullying Coordinator advises on interventions in cooperation with the Student Support Team.</li> </ul>	<p>Teamleader of the respective cycle.</p> <p><b>By Teamleader:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After the meeting a behaviour agreement with expectations and goals is sent to parents and students by email.</li> <li>Legal Concerns: If legal concerns arise, school management may inform parents/carers of their rights to report.</li> </ul>	Bullying Coordinator.
<b>Continued Monitoring and Reinforced Check-Ins (Second 4 Week Period)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The students receive a second 4 week period for behavioral improvement.</li> <li>The mentor(s) continues weekly check-ins with both the victim and bully(ies) during mentor lessons, addressing any emerging issues immediately.</li> <li>Formal Follow-Up Meeting: After the second 4 week monitoring period, mentors meet with the involved students for a thorough follow-up</li> <li>Additional support, such as restorative meetings or targeted counseling, may be offered to address the root causes of behavior and facilitate reintegration into the school community.</li> </ul>	<p><b>By Mentor:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentors are in communication with parents about updates and developments.</li> <li>Parents received an email after the formal follow up meeting with points of reflection, progress and possible action plans.</li> </ul> <p><b>By Teamleader</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal Concerns: If legal concerns arise, school management may inform parents/carers of their rights to report.</li> </ul>	The members of staff involved documents all actions in the Safeguarding system, and school management
<b>Step 3: Implementation of Level 3 or 4 Disciplinary Measures (If Bullying Persists)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal Suspension and Supportive Interventions: If bullying behavior does not improve, the school implements Consequence Level 3 measures from the Positive Behaviour Policy depending on the severity of the incidents. This may include an internal or external suspension, during which the student(s) may receive mandatory guidance to encourage behavioral change.</li> </ul>	<p><b>By Teamleader:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In case of Internal suspension or external suspension, parents receive an email from the respective Teamleader to state dates, times and expectations.</li> </ul>	The members of staff involved document all actions in the Safeguarding system, and school management informs the Anti-Bullying Coordinator of decisions made.
<b>Step 4: Final Measures if Behavior Does Not Improve (Level 4 – Suspension or Expulsion)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of Suspension, Exclusion or Removal (Level 4): If bullying persists despite prior interventions, the school may implement Level 4 actions as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy, including temporary or permanent exclusion from the school or Expulsion, following a formal review by school management.</li> </ul>	<p><b>By Head of School:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In case of external suspension or expulsion, parents receive an official letter from the Head of School and/or the Director. There is an appeal process outlined in the letter.</li> </ul>	Final Documentation and Notification: School management formally documents all actions taken in the Safeguarding system and notifies the Anti-Bullying Coordinator, who ensures a final report is completed.