

ISD Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Purpose and Philosophy

ISD School is committed to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where all students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Our approach to anti-bullying is rooted in our core values of **Wellbeing, Kindness, and Responsibility**.

2. Policy Statement

The policy aims to prevent and address bullying of any kind and to foster an open and secure environment where everyone can be treated with kindness, care and feel safe. All members of the community, including teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents, should have an understanding of what bullying is and be familiar with the school policy on bullying. Bullying is an anti-social behaviour which affects everyone; it is unacceptable and it will not be tolerated. Everyone has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention and these reports will always be taken seriously.

3. Definition of Bullying and Discriminatory Behavior

We recognize that as children learn to navigate social interactions, they will occasionally do or say something that is hurtful. It is crucial to distinguish between such occasional unkindness and bullying behavior.

A. Bullying For behavior to be classified as bullying, it must contain three essential elements:

1. **An imbalance of power.**
2. **Repetition of hurtful behaviors** over time.
3. **An intention to inflict harm**, whether physical or emotional.

Bullying is **not** the odd occasion of falling out with friends, name-calling, arguments, or pranks. These are considered part of a child's social development, where they learn to repair relationships. However, when hurtful actions are repeated "several times on purpose," they are classed as bullying.

Forms of bullying include physical, verbal, social/relational, and cyberbullying. Bullying can seriously damage a young person's confidence and self-worth and may lead to prolonged emotional harm for everyone involved—the victim, the perpetrator, and the witnesses.

B. Discriminatory Language and Behavior Bullying often targets individuals for reasons related to **race, religion, culture, special educational needs, disabilities, appearance, health conditions, sexual orientation, or family circumstances**.

Therefore, this policy also explicitly addresses and prohibits the use of inappropriate and discriminatory language or actions, even if they do not meet the full, repeated criteria for bullying. **A single incident of discriminatory language or behavior is unacceptable and will be addressed immediately.**

4. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to the entire school community, including all students, teachers, staff, administrators, and volunteers. It covers behavior occurring on school property, during school-sponsored activities, on school transport, and through electronic communication, whether on or off campus.

5. Prevention, Education, and Partnership with Parents

ISD School is proactive in preventing bullying and discrimination through a multi-faceted approach grounded in our core values. This includes educating our entire community on the different roles individuals can play in a bullying situation.

A. Understanding the Roles in Bullying Bullying often takes place in the presence of others, and the actions of these bystanders can either worsen the situation or stop it. We teach our students to recognize these roles so they can make a conscious choice to be a positive force.

- **Perpetrator:** The person who initiates the harm; the bully.
- **Reinforcer:** A person who encourages the bully by laughing, joining in, or giving them attention.
- **Bystander:** A person who witnesses the bullying but stays silent or avoids involvement.
- **Upstander:** A person who stands up for the victim by offering help, telling an adult, or directly intervening if it is safe to do so.

Our goal is to empower every member of our community to be an upstander.

B. School-Led Initiatives

- **Curriculum Integration:** We explicitly teach kindness, inclusion, and responsibility through curriculum planning, assemblies, Learning for Life lessons, and digital citizenship workshops.
- **Staff Training:** Staff are trained to identify signs of distress (e.g., poor work, isolation, spurious illness) and potential bullying hotspots.
- **Peer Support:** We encourage peer group befriending, where older pupils look out for younger ones.

C. Partnership with Parents: A Shared Responsibility We recognize that parents are essential partners in teaching children to refrain from inappropriate language and discrimination.

- **Guidance for Parents:** We will provide parents with clear guidelines to help them understand what constitutes bullying versus unkindness, and when and how to share information with the school.
- **Modeling at Home:** We ask parents to model inclusive and respectful language at home.
- **Open Dialogue:** We encourage parents to talk openly with their children about their day. If you suspect bullying, inform the school immediately.
- **Reinforce School Values:** Reinforce that taking action by telling an adult is the most responsible and helpful thing to do. It is important to tell your child not to fight back, as it can make matters worse.

6. Reporting Bullying and Discrimination

We empower all members of our community to report any incident of concern.

Who to Tell:

- Any trusted adult, including a class teacher, Tutor, Student Dean, counselor, or Principal.

What to Do If You Are Targeted:

- Remember it is not your fault. Be assertive: say "NO!" and walk away to a member of staff.
- **Tell a trusted adult straight away.**
- For cyberbullying, use the **4 R's: Recognise, Record, Report, and Retreat.**

7. Response and Intervention Procedure

All reports of unkindness, discrimination, or bullying will be investigated promptly and confidentially.

Stage One: Initial Report and Triage

- Any incident of unkind behavior will be dealt with immediately by the staff member present and passed on to the class teacher/tutor.
- If the behavior is suspected to be bullying, it must be escalated to the relevant senior leader, a written account made, and parents of all involved students will be informed.

Stage Two: Investigation

- The alleged victim, perpetrator(s), and any witnesses will be interviewed separately.
- Restorative approaches** will be used during these interviews to understand the context and impact of the behavior.

Stage Three: Action and Support If bullying or a serious incident of discrimination is confirmed, the school will take the following steps, focusing on accountability, empathy, and learning.

- Support for the Victim:**
 - Offer an opportunity to talk with a trusted staff member or counselor and create a safety plan.
 - Inform parents and relevant staff to create a supportive network.
 - Provide reflective support and use restorative practices.
- Support for Bystanders:**
 - Provide support to students who witnessed the incident to help them process the event and understand their role in creating a positive school culture.
- Intervention for the Perpetrator:**
 - Disciplinary actions will be combined with support to address the root cause of the behavior.
 - This includes informing parents, providing counseling, and implementing logical consequences.
 - Restorative practices** are used to encourage accountability and empathy.

Disciplinary Actions Depending on the severity and frequency of the behavior, actions may include a formal warning, separation from the victim, detention, internal suspension, suspension, or permanent exclusion, which the Director reserves the right to use at any stage.

8. Bullying Agreement and Mediation Protocol

To reinforce **Responsibility** and promote restorative outcomes, ISD will use a formal agreement and mediation process when bullying is confirmed.

A. The Bullying Agreement A student found to have engaged in bullying will be required to sign a formal Bullying Agreement. The purpose is to ensure the student acknowledges their behavior and commits to change.

The process includes:

- A meeting with the Student Dean and/or counselor to discuss the harmful impact of the actions.

2. The student signs the agreement, which contains:
 - **Acknowledgment** of the harmful behavior.
 - A clear **commitment to stop** the bullying immediately.
 - An agreement to participate in follow-up counseling or restorative activities.
 - A full understanding of the **consequences** if the bullying continues.

Sample Clause for Bullying Agreement: “I, [Student Name], acknowledge that my actions have harmed another student. I commit to stopping this behavior, participating in any counseling or restorative activities, and understanding that further incidents may result in more serious disciplinary action, including suspension.”

B. Restorative Mediation

- Following the signing of the agreement, a trained staff member (e.g., Student Dean or counselor) will facilitate a mediation session between the students involved. *Note: Participation is mandatory but will only proceed if it is judged to be safe and appropriate. Victims and perpetrators will only be brought together under strict guidelines, and alternative arrangements can be made if requested.*
- The focus of mediation is on understanding the impact of the behavior, encouraging **empathy and accountability**, and developing a plan to restore a safe and respectful school environment.

C. Follow-Up and Monitoring

- After the agreement and mediation, the Student Dean and counselor (in secondary) or the principal and the counselor (in primary) will actively monitor the students' interactions for a set period (e.g., 4–6 weeks).
- Any violation of the agreement will trigger further disciplinary measures.
- Counseling support remains available for both students to ensure learning, growth, and sustained change.

9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, with feedback from students, staff, and parents used to guide updates and ensure its effectiveness. Records of incidents are monitored to identify patterns and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's approach.

Policy Glossary of Important Terms

Term	Definition According to Policy	Key Distinction / Focus
Bullying	Behavior with three essential elements: imbalance of power , repetition (several times on purpose), and an intention to inflict harm (physical or emotional).	Distinguished from occasional unkindness; it is a pattern of harm.
Occasional Unkindness	Single incidents like falling out, arguments, name-calling, or pranks.	Considered a normal part of a child's social development, focused on relationship repair .

Discriminatory Language/Behavior	Inappropriate language or actions targeting individuals based on race, religion, disability, etc.	Single incidents are unacceptable and addressed immediately, regardless of repetition.
Upstander	A person who stands up for the victim by offering help, telling an adult, or directly intervening if it is safe to do so.	The desired role for all community members in a bullying situation.
Perpetrator	The person who initiates the harm ; the bully.	The student responsible for the behavior.
Trusted Adult	Any staff member (Class Teacher, Tutor, Student Dean, Counselor, or Principal) empowered to receive reports.	The primary reporting channel for students and parents.
4 R's (Cyberbullying)	A procedure for students targeted by online harm: Recognise, Record, Report, and Retreat.	A specific protocol for digital harm.
Restorative Practices / Mediation	Approaches used during interviews and dedicated sessions to understand the context and impact of the behavior, encouraging empathy and accountability.	Focuses on repairing harm and the relationship, not just punishment.
Bullying Agreement	A formal document the perpetrator must sign acknowledging the harmful behavior and committing to stop the bullying immediately.	A mandatory protocol for accountability and change.

Policy Communication of Steps

The policy clearly outlines two major sets of steps: **What is Bullying** and **What Steps to Take**.

1. Steps We Consider to be Bullying (The Definition)

The policy provides a strong framework by stating that for behavior to be classified as bullying, it **must contain three essential elements** (Section 2A):

Element	Communication to People
1. An imbalance of power.	This communicates that bullying is not a fair fight or argument; the victim struggles to defend themselves.

2. Repetition of hurtful behaviors over time.

This explicitly draws the line between "odd occasion of falling out" and bullying (which must be repeated "**several times on purpose**").

3. An intention to inflict harm, whether physical or emotional.

This focuses on the deliberate malicious intent of the action.

The Policy's 10 Essentials

1. Purpose: To foster a safe, respectful environment based on Wellbeing, Kindness, and Responsibility, enabling all students to thrive.
2. Definition: Bullying is defined by a pattern of repeated, intentional harm involving an imbalance of power, distinguishing it from occasional unkindness.
3. Scope & Zero Tolerance: The policy applies everywhere (on/off campus, online) and mandates immediate action for any single incident of discriminatory language.
4. Prevention: The school proactively teaches kindness, inclusion, and digital citizenship and trains all staff to spot warning signs and hot spots.
5. Bystanders/Upstanders: Students are educated on roles in bullying, with the goal of empowering everyone to be an Upstander who intervenes or reports.
6. Reporting: All members of the community are empowered to report incidents immediately to any trusted adult, like a teacher, counselor, or Principal.
7. Investigation: All reports are triaged, promptly investigated, and involve separate interviews with all parties, using restorative approaches.
8. Accountability & Support: Confirmed bullying results in support for the victim, counseling for the perpetrator, and clear logical consequences.
9. Bullying Agreement: Perpetrators must sign a formal agreement acknowledging the harm and committing to stop the behavior immediately.
10. Restoration & Monitoring: An essential restorative mediation follows (if safe), with active monitoring for 4–6 weeks to ensure the agreement and a safe environment are upheld.