

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



POLICY STATEMENT

American Academy is committed to ensure that all students feel welcome and that they belong at American Academy. We will ensure that all students feel safe and happy in school and are able to learn in a supportive, caring environment without the fear of being bullied. Bullying is an anti-social behavior and it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the school.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

All teaching and non-teaching staff, students, and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.

All teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.

All students, parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying occurs.

To deal effectively with bullying.

To ensure that all members of the school community feel responsible for combating bullying.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

American Academy bullying is defined as repeated actions, intentionally carried out to cause harm, offence or injury to another person or group.

Emotional

Any actions that impact on the emotional wellbeing of another person.

Deliberately causing harm or offence to another person or group of people by using unkind language, teasing, name calling, taunting and making negative personal comments.

- Excluding individuals from conversations, activities or groups.
- Ridiculing or causing humiliation – either face to face, through spreading rumors or inappropriate use of technology.
- Tormenting others by taking their possessions, hiding books, threatening gestures, using social media to provoke a reaction.

Physical

Any form of actual physical violence or threat of violence including intimidation, for example:

- Hitting including any variation of kicking, slapping, punching, pushing or using an object to have the same effect.
- Theft of property or possessions.
- Intentionally causing damage to property or possessions

Harmful sexual behavior

This includes any unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments for example:

- Using sexually explicit words and phrases
- Inappropriate touching
- Using sexual threats or violence
- Forced or exploitative sexual activity
- Sexual harassment
- Using sexual threats or violence
- Forced or exploitative sexual activity
- Sexual harassment
- Forcing another person to look at sexual body parts

Online bullying and Inappropriate use of social media

More commonly known as 'cyber bullying' – which is the misuse of technologies or communications to cause harm, injury or offense. For example:

- Mobile threats by text messaging and calls.
- Misuse of other technology i.e. cameras and video facilities, games consoles.
- Students who engage in 'group chats' which are created to target an individual with the intention of being unkind or to cause offence.
- Sharing of inappropriate material online – including material that is racist, homophobic, sexist, includes extremist content or discriminatory language against people with special needs and disabilities.
- Sharing inappropriate material of a sexual content (including sexting).
- Deliberate attempts to contact staff via social media or use their online profile to harass, intimidate, make threats or cause offence to any member of staff and / or adult.
- Using social media to humiliate, harass, intimidate, make threats or cause offence or anxiety to another student.

Prejudice based bullying

Prejudice-based bullying (also known as Identity-based bullying) refers to any form of bullying related to the characteristics considered unique to a child's identity. These forms of bullying are not only targeted at an individual, but reflect negative attitudes towards a wider sub-community or group to whom that individual identifies with.

Prejudice-based bullying can be separated in to 9 characteristics unique to a child's identity, these are:

- **Race or ethnicity:** bullying directed towards an individual which relates to their skin color, ethnicity, or national identity. Includes racial taunts, graffiti or gestures.
- **Gender:** bullying based around sexist attitudes or sexually inappropriate behaviors, intended to either demean or humiliate an individual because of their sex.
- **Homophobic**, biphobia and transphobic: bullying because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality or gender identity.
- **Religion or belief:** bullying motivated by prejudice against an individual's perceived or actual religious or spiritual beliefs and practices.
- **Learning disability/difficulty:** Bullying of children who have an impairment which affects the way they learn, understand, socialize and communicate (i.e. speech and language difficulties).
- **Disability:** Bullying of children who have a physical or mental impairment. For example, mobility, visual or hearing impairments, epilepsy, diabetes or a progressive condition such as multiple sclerosis.
- **Asylum seekers and refugees:** because of or focusing on being from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds.
- **Gypsy, Roma and Traveler:** because of or focusing on being a member of a travelling community.

WHAT IS NOT BULLYING?

One-off incidents

Bullying is persistent and repetitive, and generally fits a pattern of behavior. However, there will be occasions when a one-off incident is so significant that it causes long term effects and is therefore categorized as bullying. One example may be extreme public humiliation that deters someone from engaging in discussions or social events.

Mutual conflict

A disagreement, argument or fight in which both parties have equally participated and where there is no imbalance of power.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

We are committed to developing a culture of inclusion, tolerance and respect in order to encourage mutually supportive students at American Academy.

ALL bullying is unacceptable, regardless of who bullies, how it is delivered or what reasons are given to justify it.

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Bullying has the potential to damage the emotional wellbeing and mental health of those affected by it, including those who witness this abuse.

We realize that people who are bullied do not always show their hurt and speak about it. If you know someone is being bullied, you must tell a teacher.

Signs and symptoms that someone may be experiencing bullying

Change in routines or behaviors	Physical Signs	Changes in mood or personality
Is frightened of walking to or from school	Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged	Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
Doesn't want to go on the school/public bus	Has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'	Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
Begs to be driven to school	Has unexplained cuts or bruises	Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
Changes their usual routine	Has dinner or other money continually 'lost'	Feels ill in the mornings
Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)	Comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)	Begins to do poorly in schoolwork
Begins to truant	Stops eating	Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
	Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)	Is bullying other children or siblings
	Gives improbable excuses for any of the above	Is frightened to say what is wrong
		Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
		Is nervous or jumpy when using their phone or electronic device

These signs and behaviors could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

If you suspect your child is being bullied, please report your concern to American Academy staff immediately so that we can investigate.

It is important that you advise your child not to fight back, it can make it worse. Parents/teachers must help us ensure we have a culture of tolerance and respect at school by promoting this at home.

Bullying directly impacts on emotional wellbeing of students and we will ensure that any reports of bullying are dealt with in accordance of the schools anti bullying policy.

ANTI-BULLYING ETHOS

American Academy aims to tackle bullying through creating an ethos and culture of respect, kindness and acceptance of difference.

School will do this by:

- School agreement and code of conduct involves students, parents and teachers in setting out what we expect of each other as a caring community.
- All students have lessons which cover bullying and how to deal with it during each school year.

- We shall keep students aware of the issue of bullying through assemblies and form tutor time and in lessons whenever it is appropriate.
- Staff to follow the equality policy; welcoming every child to our school. Staff must be careful not to highlight differences of children or an individual child, even if this is done in jest.
- Staff will challenge inappropriate and unpleasant comments.
- Reports of bullying will be investigated by the school swiftly.

Students are expected to:

- Report bullying either towards you or when you see it happening to others. Not reporting a bullying incident allows the bully to continue with their bullying behavior.
- Never stand by and watch bullying take place whether it is face to face or online.
- Walk away from situations that make you feel uncomfortable and talk to an adult as soon as you can.
- Support staff investigate incidents by completing a student statement form, honestly and quickly, when asked to do so.
- Avoid situations on social media where bullying can take place and will try to persuade friends to do the same.
- Avoid using social media or text messaging when it is used with the intention of causing offence, harm or injury to another person. You must report any incidents in school immediately.
- Follow American Academy's code of conduct.

Parents are asked to:

- Work with American Academy staff and make us aware of any issues as soon as they arise.
- Monitor student's social media activity to ensure they are safe online and are not being bullied or using social media inappropriately
- Allow American Academy staff the opportunity to investigate incidents first and not take matters into their own hands.
- Inform school if they intend to report incidents of bullying to the police.
- Follow the school's complaints procedure if they are unhappy with the outcome of an investigation.

ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES**Reporting Bullying – Students**

Students can report any incidents of bullying to any member of staff at American Academy who will take the appropriate action.

- Any American Academy staff should be the first point of contact for most students as they see them every day. However, we understand that staff might be busy at the time and/or it may not always be possible to speak to a staff privately.
- A Safeguarding officer is available to speak to students who are experiencing any personal issues at home and at school.
- The Head of School – is always dedicated to ensuring all students feel safe and cared for at American Academy and students can report any issues directly to him/her.

Reporting bullying – Staff

- Members of staff should record the behavior and record any incidents that they observe in the incident log.
- All staff have a responsibility to challenge any unacceptable behavior including any behavior that could be defined as 'bullying' as set out in the policy.

Reporting bullying – Parents

- Parents who have any concerns should contact American Academy first.

Anti-Bullying Process**Step 1**

Incident has been reported by student, staff or parent. The incident is investigated, evidence gathered, and statements are taken.

If bullying is suspected an investigation will take place and we will talk to the suspected victim, the suspected bully and any witnesses.

Step 2

The Head of School examines the evidence and decides if the incident should be treated as a one off incident, a mutual conflict or evidence of bullying. (Referring to the definition provided in the policy.)

If the incident is a one off incident or mutual conflict American Academy will follow the schools conduct policy and take appropriate action.

Step 3

If the incident has been recorded as bullying the following actions will take place:

Parents of all involved will be informed that the incident is being dealt with as 'Bullying'. This will be formally recorded in writing to both the 'victim' and 'perpetrator'

Consequences will be issued by the Head of School in line with the school's policy. The consequence will be based upon the seriousness of the incident and the level of harm caused to the victim.

Some incidents of bullying may warrant intervention of the police depending upon the severity of the incident or if a crime has been committed. Parents will be informed if this decision has been made.

Repeated Reports

If the same 'perpetrator' is reported to carry out other acts of bullying towards the same or different students, the school will take further action. Students who are known to be intentionally causing harm, injury or offense to students at American Academy will receive our most serious consequences, including risk of being expelled from American Academy.

The school is responsible for completing a register/log of bullying incidents in line with the Safeguarding guidelines and will make a termly report of such incidents.

American Academy will aim to ensure that support is in place for the victims of those who have been bullied and that they are supported with their emotional wellbeing and to promote positive wellbeing and building resilience. We will discipline those that bully others, we will also offer to help them to change their behavior.

SUPPORT FOR STAFF

We will ensure appropriate agencies contact details are available for staff for example in the staff handbook and/or a section of the school website and on notice boards in the staff room.

Bullying or harassment of staff should be reported to the Head of School

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Parents are supported to refer to the complaint procedure in regards to any issues with the school. Parent should make a formal complaint in writing to the Head of School.