

Anti-bullying Policy

Rationale

At Ajman Academy we commit ourselves to providing an environment where all students feel safe and protected from harm. This framework endeavours to provide a set of guiding principles to promote a safe, caring and happy learning environment for all members of our school community; to ensure that all students become confident, self-motivated and independent lifelong learners.

Nowadays, unfortunately, schools both large and small often contain some students with the potential for bullying. As an Academy, we recognise that bullying does occur and have therefore put into place a clear set of guidelines that recognises bullying as being anti-social and unacceptable. This document will also explain how the Academy will deal with bullying and cyber-bullying, bullying complaints, and the provision of intervention.

Through the Academy's PSHE programme, we will use teaching time to raise student awareness of our zero tolerance for all bullying behaviour, how to deal with a bully, and what avenues of support are provided within the school if one is a victim. In the case of cyber-bullying, the school will provide cyber-bullying safety strategies and internet support materials during PSHE time and embed it in Information Technology classes and throughout the curriculum.

This policy applies to all members of our school community, which includes students, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents/caregivers and visitors to the school. As members of the AJAC community we have a responsibility to support and promote this document for the benefit of all.

Definition of bullying

Acts of bullying can happen anywhere. It can be in the classroom, in the playground, on the sports field, transiting from home to school, on school transport and through the use of electronic technology, in particular: text messages or emails, posting unkind messages, inappropriate image tagging, rumours sent by email or posted on social networking sites or the posting of embarrassing pictures, videos or the use of fake profiles to hurt, threaten, blackmail, or lower self-esteem in a student.

Victims of bullying may hesitate to report the behaviour out of fear of retribution, or because they feel that they should deal with the problem on their own. The impact of bullying may be manifested by poor grades, solitude or moodiness at home, or nervous reactions such as loss of appetite or insomnia.

Bullying involves a person being hurt, distressed, pressured or victimised by repeated intentional attacks by another individual or group. Bullies abuse less powerful individuals by intimidation and/or harassment. Bullying may involve physical, verbal, textual, psychological or social behaviour. For example:

Physical: hitting, punching, grabbing, pushing, scratching, biting, spitting, tripping, pulling hair.

Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting.

Racial: racial taunts, name calling, gestures, graffiti.

Religious: religious taunts, name calling.

Verbal: name calling, teasing, putdowns, sarcasm, ethnic or religious insults; physical, social or academic disability insults.

Textual: passing notes, writing on desks or in Student Planners/Diaries. Electronic forms: SMS, email; social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, 'What's app' etc.

Social: ignoring, excluding, mimicking, spreading rumours; defaming, dirty looks, intimidation, extortion, stealing, hiding, breaking possessions; inappropriate photos on social networking sites.

Why it is important to respond to bullying

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect. Students who bully need to learn different ways of behaving. We have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Links to school associated policies

- Child Protection Policy
- Secondary School Sanction Procedures Flow Chart
- Progress reports
- SEN Policy

Aims of our policy

- To ensure that all students, parents and staff are aware of the above definition of bullying and the distressing effect it has on its victims.
- To ensure that all students, parents and staff are fully aware of the referral procedures for reporting bullying incidents and the strategies adopted for supporting those involved in these incidents.
- To establish a climate in which students who are bullied, or think another student is being bullied, can speak freely to an appropriate staff member with the full knowledge that they will be listened to and receive a prompt, appropriate and sensitive response.
- To create an Academy community where bullying is recognised as unacceptable and where all students feel valued, secure and happy.

School responsibilities

- Provide access to the anti-bullying policy to all members of the school community, via the school website.
- Involve staff, parents and UAE approved agencies, in supporting the procedures instigated across the school.
- Ensure the staff work within the guidelines of the policy.
- Provide support and guidance to targets of bullying.
- Provide intervention with individuals who bully others.
- Use the PSHE curriculum to discuss all aspects of bullying and the appropriate way to behave towards and respect each other.

Teacher responsibilities

- Model anti-bullying attitudes and behaviour.
- Take responsibility for either teaching the PSHE programme or supporting it.
- Support the School Aims 2 & 3 of tolerance, respect and valuing diversity.
- Listen and respond to reports of bullying, provide support and refer as needed.
- Implement the school code of conduct and anti-bullying policy.

Parent responsibilities

- Support the values of tolerance and respect in the home.
- Encourage your child to exercise these values in all contexts including at school.
- Report bullying and encourage your child to do so.
- Provide support and encourage your child to seek help.
- Work with the school to resolve bullying issues.

Student responsibilities

- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Speak out against bullying and report it when you see it.
- Support students who are bullied.
- Respect and support School Prefect initiatives.
- Support the Student Representative of House and Council to assist with anti-bullying suggestions.

Policy application

Action to be taken when bullying is suspected:

Teachers will respond to all episodes of bullying in order to send a clear message that it is unacceptable. Different responses may be appropriate depending on the nature and degree of the bullying. The questions identified below will be used initially to determine if the incident is primarily bullying or if it falls into another sanctions category.

The teacher will ask the student the following types of questions:

- Was there teasing or aggressive words or actions said?
- Was the bullying unprovoked?
- Did the bullying intend to hurt, harm or frighten?

If the answer is 'yes' to all of the above, then it is bullying and will be followed up. See 'Our Response to Bullying' in the flowchart.

If it's not a bullying incident it could be:

- Conflict: this may require conflict resolution.
- Discipline: this may require HoY/ TL/ SMT Sanctions.
- Learning: this may require learning support.

Students

To prevent bullying students need to:

- Work to create a happy school environment for all.
- Respect themselves and others.
- Learn to tolerate and accept individual differences.
- Stand up against bullying behaviour.
- Support the school policy on bullying.

If you are bullied YOU need to:

- Tell the bully to stop.
- Seek help and talk about it to someone you trust.
- Report it to a teacher.
- Try not to show you are upset - this is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people - there is safety in numbers.
- Do not fight back as it may make matters worse; however, if you decide to fight back, talk to a teacher or parent first.

In cyber bullying YOU need to:

- Tell a trusted adult about the bullying.
- Do not open or read messages from cyber bullies.
- Tell a teacher/HoY or administrator at your school if school related.
- Do not erase the messages - they may be used to take action.
- Protect yourself - never agree to meet face to face with anyone you meet online.
- Block bullies on 'chat or instant' messaging websites.
- Always make sure your privacy settings are tight.

If you know someone who is being bullied YOU need to:

- Care enough to do something about it, whether it affects you personally or not.
- Step in early and try to defuse the situation before it gets out of hand.
- Report it to a teacher or parent - take a friend with you if you want.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.
- Do not be tempted to forward cyber messages on.
- Do not join a cyber-group just to find out 'what is going on.'

Parents

If your child is bullied you need to:

- Work with the school to support your child.
- Call the school, not the other child's parents.
- Report the incidents even if your child does not want this.
- Tell your child the following:
 - that bullying is wrong;
 - all students have the right to attend school without fear;
 - the problem is unlikely to stop without adult intervention;
 - for school related cyber-bullying, make a screen print of the bullying comments/photos and take to the School Leader in charge of pastoral care;
 - check your child's device and computer privacy settings;
 - report the bullying person's cyber name to the website provider;
 - if extremely explicit, take the screenshots to the police or local safeguarding authority when set in place by the UAE;
 - help your child learn to stand up against bullying behaviour;
 - support the School's stance on bullying and their various policies.

If you find out your child has bullied another student you need to be firm and:

- Tell them it is wrong and to stop.
- Know that the profile of bullies includes:
 - both boys and girls;
 - often popular outgoing and successful students.
- Students who may have also been victims of bullying.

If your child is cyber-bullying you need to tell them to:

- Realise that there will always be a footprint in cyberspace of your child's behaviour and it can be traced.
- Realise that cyber-bullying has no geographical boundaries and your child can be involved in it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Take away IT hardware from your child's bedroom, particularly at night.
- Work with the school and support the school policy on anti-bullying.

If your child sees another child being bullied you need to tell them:

- It is wrong and not to support the bully.
- To support the student who is bullied.
- To report it to a teacher.
- Help them by making an anonymous report by leaving an envelope in the school office for an appropriate trusted teacher.

What indicators do we use to measure our success?

1. Record the number of students who have come forward to report bullying.
2. Record the number of incidents and note the change of frequency over time.
3. Review sample cases for reflection and future planning.
4. Record the number of cases where bullying has stopped.
5. Through a PSHE student survey and a staff survey, note any comments or strategies students/teachers are using on 'Feeling Safe and Secure' at school.