



## The British International School, Victoria Island. (BIS)

### BIS Anti Bullying Policy

#### **Statement.**

The aim of the BIS anti-bullying policy is to prevent bullying of any sort and to ensure that everyone can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. All members of the community, including Trustees, 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; therefore the aim of the policy is to help members of the school community to deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly, to prevent it. Bullying is an anti-social behaviour which affects everyone; it is unacceptable and it will not be tolerated. Everyone in the community has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention and these reports will always be taken seriously.

This policy is available on the school website, in staff handbooks and electronic shared staff areas and by request from the Principal's Office.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's policies on Equal Opportunities, Behaviour, Exclusion Expulsion, Removal and Review, our PSE schemes of work and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of Students.

This anti-bullying document is also compliant with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding School (2011), Standard 12: Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships and the Single Equality Act, 2010. The policy has regard through significant requirements to the current DfE Guidance – Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies (July 2011).

#### **Definition of Bullying.**

Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include,

- physical (including sexual) assault.
- verbal abuse, by name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks.
- cyber-bullying, which is defined as the use of ICT by an individual or group in a way that is intended to upset others. Examples include using social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, photographs, video and e-mail.
- indirect emotional tormenting by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumours.

Bullying may involve complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It may be overt and intimidatory but is often hidden and

subtle. It includes actions or comments that are racist, religious or cultural, sexist, sexual or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape).

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being at and on the way to and from school. Bullying is also a top concern of children and young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self esteem; and destroys their sense of security. Bullying impacts on its victims' attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. At worst, bullying has been a factor in student suicide.

It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. It should also be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as to their victim. All students deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is. There are criminal laws that apply to harassment, assault and threatening behaviour.

### **Anti-Bullying Procedure**

#### What to look for

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

All members of the community must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with School policy. Surveys have shown that in the vast majority of bullying incidents, MOST people knew that what was going on was wrong. Sometimes people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what is going on, fail to take action.

#### What to do

The way to stamp out bullying is for people to be aware of the issues involved, and to be clear in their own minds what action to take should cases arise:

#### If you are the victim

1. If you feel able to, confront the bully by verbally making him/her aware that you think that what he/she is doing is wrong.
2. Share your feelings with someone else.
3. If possible talk to a member of Staff, your Tutor, your Head School, Vice Principal or Principal about the incident. Boarders may prefer to talk to House Parents or the Head of Boarding or a particular teacher they feel most comfortable talking to. If you would rather not go straight to a member of staff, talk to your friends; talk to senior students in your House, a mentor or one of the Prefects or any trusted adult. They may well be able to advise on an appropriate course of action, or will be able to involve other people who can. There are also people outside the School who would be willing to help.

### Procedure if a Student should witness bullying behaviour

1. Support the victim by offering your friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong.
2. Encourage them to speak out on their own behalf by confronting the bully, or with their permission, confront the bully yourself.
3. Accompany the victim to a trusted adult, or suggest that you see a member of staff on their behalf.

### Procedure for members of Staff should you witness an incident of bullying or it is reported to you

1. Reassure and support the Students involved.
2. Advise them that you are required to pass details on to the relevant member of the pastoral team.
3. Inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible. In the case of incidents involving boarders; Tutor, Head of School, Head of Boarding House and Head of Boarding should all be informed. Heads of School must record all incidents of reported bullying and ensure that the Vice Principal is informed. The Vice Principal will keep a central log of all complaints or incidences of bullying and record the way in which they were dealt.

### What will happen?

The victim will be interviewed by their Form Tutor, Head of School, or Vice Principal/Principal on their own, and asked to write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them. The victim is also given the opportunity to discuss his own reactions and behaviour towards the bully. The victim is given support and advice and counselling is suggested if deemed appropriate.

Once it is clear that a bullying offence has been committed, the bully and any others involved will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them.

Details of the incident will be recorded on all the Students' files. The Vice Principal is copied in so that it can be recorded as a bullying incident. The pastoral team will decide on an appropriate course of action. In the first instance the tutor or Head of School will interview the Student or Students whose behaviour has caused distress and give him/them a formal bullying warning; making it clear that any further incident (or discussion about the current incident) would be considered to be further bullying. It will be made clear why the behaviour was inappropriate and unacceptable. Support and counselling will be offered. A suitable punishment will also be given.

If the Head of School decides it is appropriate, or it is a Student's second offence, the Vice Principal will become involved and the parents of the perpetrator/s will be informed by letter or telephone. The following sanctions may be applied in accordance with the School behavioural policy.

- **Formal School Warning from the Vice Principal.** The Vice Principal will speak to the Students involved and will contact the parents or guardians giving details of the offence and inviting them in to School to discuss the matter and to be present when their child is given a Formal School Warning. Their support for the School's actions should be enlisted if possible.
- **Suspension** at the Principal's discretion (see the School's Discipline and Exclusion Policy).
- **Exclusion** at the Principal's discretion (see the School's Discipline and Exclusion Policy).

The School will raise awareness of the staff through training and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur. The key points from this policy will be prominently displayed on School notice boards and will be discussed with Students during Tutor led CP sessions. Anti-bullying will feature as a discussion point for Student committees and feedback will be taken to School Council. It will also be revisited as necessary during RPSE sessions to all years and reinforced in other areas of the curriculum as the opportunities present themselves e.g. drama, physical education. Opportunities will also be sought to allow parents to contribute to the School's actions to prevent bullying.

Annual Student surveys will be used to facilitate an understanding of the level and type of bullying that Students might have experienced.

Incidents of reported bullying will be followed up by tutors and Heads of Year, to monitor that the problem has been resolved. The record of bullying offences will be reviewed by the Vice Principal and the Pastoral teams regularly at Heads of Year meetings to watch for patterns and check that the policy is effective.

We are absolutely confident that the vast majority of the BIS community will agree with our sentiments on Bullying. It is our intention to identify and take action against those who do not.

### **References**

DCSF Safe to Learn, *Embedding anti-bullying work in schools*.

National Minimum Standards for Boarding School (2011), Standard 12: Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships.

DFE Guidance – Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies (July 2011)

[www.cyberbullying.org](http://www.cyberbullying.org)