



10a – Antibullying

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| 1.Statutory Policies | Part 2 |
| ISI | Part 3: Welfare, Health, and Safety – Safeguarding |
| Author Led | Headmaster |
| Date of Review | June 2024 |
| Next Review | May 2025 |
| Comment | Annual Review |
| Website | Yes |

Related Policies:

BISC Staff Code of Conduct Policy

BISC Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2024 - 2025

Related Documents:

Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2024

The UK Equality Act, 2010

The Education Act, 2011

1. Purpose

This is a lengthy and detailed policy since the topic it covers is extensive, complex and can have significant, if not life-long impact on the lives of our young people. The seriousness of bullying, both physical and emotional can cause significant psychological damage and so will have we take any allegations / incidents extremely seriously. Therefore, our policy is informed by the UK government's most recent advice - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024. See:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6650a1967b792ffff71a83e8/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf

The document states: "All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer-on-peer / child-on-child abuse).

This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying).
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or causing physical harm.
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm.
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery).
- Initiation/having type violence and rituals.

We will, therefore, deal firmly with these examples and any other kinds of child-on-child / peer-on-peer abuse as part of our anti-bullying policy. We know that such behaviour causes harm to young people. However, we want to reduce the extent of that harm, with full consideration to impact on that individual child's emotional and mental health and well-being.

2. What is bullying

This document references recent non-statutory advice available to British headteachers as follows:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally – both the mental and physical health are relevant to safeguarding and the welfare of our students. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyberbullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously any school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; we will make our own judgements about each specific case. Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour.

Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and is not acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating. This has become a priority in Britain. Since September 2014, for example, a greater focus on how well school leaders tackle low-level disruption was included in UK Ofsted inspections.

3. The legal context and our situation

We are, of course, governed by Moroccan rather than British law. Nonetheless, and without intending to break Moroccan law, which does not protect the rights of all those groups identified in the UK's 2010 Equality Act, we aim always (and as far as possible) to ensure respect for the protected characteristics of age, disability, marriage, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief and sex.

Our values remain those of integrity, compassion, and tolerance.

Equally, the Moroccan Constitution aligns itself with the UK's 2010 Equality Act in forbidding many of the kinds of discrimination, harassment and victimisation that are also proscribed in the British document.

Although not necessarily constrained by law, we consider it our duty in relation to students with disabilities and/or special educational needs engage in the activities of the school together with children who do not have these needs.

4. Schools' accountability and record-keeping

Students will learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus. We therefore recognise that one of the ways in which we are held to account is how well we deal with behaviour and bullying. Given that we record incidents of bullying, we hope to be able to show, over time, that our anti-bullying policies are having an impact. However, we recognise the current limitation that our school is only in its fifth year of operation.

Additionally, it matters less that we have recorded incidents of bullying than that we understand the impact of the actions our school has taken, i.e., how effectively we can prevent or deal with any incidents.

5. Safeguarding children and young people

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern as it would be under the UK Children Act 1989.

Where this is the case, school staff should discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead.

6. Criminal law

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in Morocco, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence. If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed, school leadership may seek assistance from the police.

7. Bullying which occurs outside school premises

School staff members may choose to discipline students for misbehaving outside the school premises if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate students' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a city centre. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Headmaster should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or other appropriate local authorities of the action taken against a student. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

While school staff members have the power to discipline students for bullying that occurs outside school, they can only impose the disciplinary sanction and implement that sanction on the school premises or when the student is under the lawful control of school staff, for instance on a school trip.

8. Cyber-bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. In Britain, The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the headmaster/mistress, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools in the UK and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

In the interests of tackling bullying, the school may, from time to time, choose to adopt similar practices.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police.

If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline. Staff should refer to relatively recent non-statutory advice for British headteachers on the topic:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf

9. Prevention

Our response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. Instead, we should proactively gather intelligence about issues between students which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to students about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies. Staff themselves will be able to determine what will work best for their students, depending on the particular issues they need to address.

We have an ethos of good behaviour where we expect students to treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. This is reinforced in our PHSCE programme, our SMSC Policy and our Essential British Values policy and we aim to make it a culture that extends beyond the classroom to the corridors, the cafeteria, the playground, and beyond the school gates including travel to and from school.

Values of respect for staff and other staff, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older students who set a good example to the rest.

We also seek to:

- Involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied and so that parents feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and they reinforce the value of good behaviour at home.
- Involve students. All our students should understand our approach and should be clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.
- Regularly evaluate and update our approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers
- Implement disciplinary sanctions. We intend that the consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.

- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality, or appearance related difference. We also teach our children that using any prejudice-based language is unacceptable.
- Make it easy for students to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to, and incidents acted on. We want our students to feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying.
- Create an inclusive environment. We want our school to be a safe place where students can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination.
- Celebrate success. Celebrating success is an important way of creating a positive school ethos around the issue. We do this, for example, every week in our assemblies.

10. Investigating Bullying

Each case will be different, but we generally advise the following procedure:

1. Gather the facts:

Speak to all the young people involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them, and use consistent language and open questions for each account. The easiest way to do this is not to have a line of questioning but to ask the young people to tell you what happened.

Only interrupt the young person from this to gain clarity with open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?)

2. Consider the Intent (begin to Risk Assess):

Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

3. Decide on your next course of action:

If from the information that you gather you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm, you would normally make a safeguarding referral to social care immediately (where a crime has been committed the police should be involved).

Here, it may be necessary to contact the Observatoire National des Droits de L'Enfant (ONDE) www.2511.ma. The Headmaster will do this, in conjunction with the school's Moroccan Liaison Officer and or HR Department.

4. Inform parents:

In the school context in Morocco, this will almost always be done at a senior level, by the Headmaster or his designated deputy. The best way to inform parents is face to face. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

5. Points to consider:

- What is the age of the children involved?
- How old are the young people involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved? In relation to sexual exploration, children under the age of five, in particular 1–4-year-olds who are learning toileting skills may show a particular interest in exploration at around this stage. This should not be overlooked if other issues arise.
- Where did the incident or incidents take place?
- Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so, was it observed? If not, is more supervision required within this particular area?
- What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?
- Can each of the young people give the same explanation of the incident and also what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one young person different from another and why?
- What is each of the children's own understanding of what occurred? Do the young people know/understand what they are doing (e.g., do they have knowledge of body parts, of privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch)? Is the young person's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the young person have understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the other person?
- Repetition. Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion? In the same way it must be considered has the behaviour persisted to an individual after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved?

In dealing with an incident of this nature the answers are not always clear cut. If you are concerned or unsure as to whether or not there is any risk involved, please seek advice from the senior staff.

6. Next Steps:

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

11. For the young person who has been harmed by bullying or peer-on-peer / child-on-child abuse

What support they require depends on the individual student. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends. In which case it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future.

If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on cyber bullying, relationship abuse etc. It may be that through the continued curriculum of PHSCE and SMSC that certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently.

If the young person feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support.

12. For the student who has displayed harmful behaviour

We will find out why the student has behaved in such a way. It may be that he/she is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases, we will provide support such as one to one mentoring or counselling.

Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the young person has been met, we will ensure the student(s) concerned receives consequence for their behaviour. This may be in the form of restorative justice e.g., making amends with the student(s) they have targeted if this has been some form of bullying.

We may also choose a sanction as a consequence such as exclusion or internal exclusion/inclusion/seclusion for a period of time to allow the student to reflect on their behaviour.

13. After care

It is important that following any incident the student involved continues to feel supported and receives help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g., self-harm). In which case, regular reviews with the young people following the incident(s) are imperative.

14. Further Support for students who are bullied

We accept our responsibility to support children who are bullied and make appropriate provision for a child's needs. The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. These can include a quiet word from a teacher that knows the student well, asking the pastoral team (class teacher, DSL) to provide support, providing formal counselling, engaging with parents.

15. Vulnerable students

Bullying can happen to all children and young people, and it can affect their social, mental, and emotional health. We aim to support all students who are bullied. This means being alert to the effect any form of bullying can have and being especially alert to where it may have a severe impact. There is evidence to suggest that students that are badly bullied in school are also more likely to be bullied out of school, for instance either on their way to or from school or through cyberbullying.

Some students are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. For example, those with special educational needs or disabilities, those who are adopted, those who are suffering from a health problem or those with caring responsibilities may be more likely to experience bullying because of difference. These young people are often the same young people who might need greater support to deal with the impact of bullying, for example those who are going through a personal or family crisis.

In addition, children with special educational needs or disabilities can often lack the social or communication skills to report such incidents so it is important that staff are alert to the potential bullying this group faces and that their mechanisms for reporting are accessible to all. The impact of bullying can be severe because of the nature and extent of the bullying or because it is combined with other factors such as those mentioned above that also affect the social, mental, and emotional health of the student.

16. Where bullying has a severe impact

In some circumstances the consequences of bullying may lead to a child experiencing pronounced social, emotional, or mental health difficulties. If this happens, we will make appropriate provision for a child's short-term needs and implement an action plan to address any serious impact on a child's ability to learn. In extreme cases, this may lead to an assessment of the child for Special Educational Needs. If the bullying leads to persistent, long-lasting difficulties that cause the child or young person to have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age, then schools should consider whether the child will benefit from being assessed for SEN. Some bullied children will have SEN.

17. Separate on site provision

Removing bullied children from school, even for a short time, disrupts their education and can make it difficult for them to reintegrate. It also fails to address the causes of the problem and can send the wrong message that victims of bullying are unwelcome. We will respond sensitively where an absence arises as a result of bullying. We will do all we can to ensure bullied children continue to attend school. In addition to the examples of support listed above, this could include using separate on-site provision that provides respite for bullied students, whilst maintaining their educational progression. It is important that this support goes hand-in-hand with measures to tackle the bullying so that bullied children feel safe at school, and on their way to and from school.

18. Discipline and tackling underlying issues of bullying

We will apply disciplinary measures to students who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. We will apply disciplinary measures fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the student may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable students. It is also important to consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. When this is the case, the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.

19. Support for staff who are bullied

It is important that schools take measures to prevent and tackle bullying among students. But it is equally important that schools make it clear that bullying of staff, whether by students, parents, or colleagues, is unacceptable.

20. Preventative Strategies

Peer on peer / child on child abuse or bullying can and will occur on any site even with the most stringent of policies and support mechanisms. Thus, it is important to continue to recognise and manage such risks and learn how to improve and move forward with strategies in supporting young people to talk about any issues and through sharing information with all staff.

We hope to achieve this by ensuring that our school is an open environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them. We believe we achieve this through our strong and positive PHSCE/SMSC curriculum that tackles such issues as prejudiced behaviour and gives children an open forum to talk things through rather than seek one on one opportunities to be harmful to one another.

We aim, therefore, to ensure that everyone who works with us feels confident and enabled to talk about issues and challenge perceptions of young people including use of inappropriate language and behaviour towards one another.

In order to create such an environment, we will continue to provide whole staff training and CPD around abusive behaviours and talking to young people in a way that continues to create an open and honest environment without prejudice. Staff must not dismiss issues as 'banter' or 'growing up' or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. Staff must consider each issue and everyone before taking action. If staff minimise the concerns raised it may result in a staff seeking no further help or advice.

Finally, it is useful to ensure young people are part of changing their circumstances and that of the procedures within schools. We have a School Council, House Captains, Prefects, and we encourage our students to support changes and develop 'rules of acceptable behaviour' that will go far in helping to create a positive ethos in school and one where all students understand the boundaries of behaviour before it becomes abusive.

Useful references:

Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE, July 2017)

Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (2014)