

# School of Modern Skills

## Anti-bullying Policy

*Last updated: October 2022*



<b>Policy:</b>	<b>Anti-bullying Policy</b>
<b>Policy owner:</b>	<b>Wellbeing Department</b>
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Dubai School of Modern Skills, SMS, is concerned about the welfare and safety of all its pupils and attempts to create an environment in which pupils feel secure, valued, listened to and taken seriously.

## Aims

We aim to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school in compliance with the UAE laws. Our school values promote inclusivity, respect, whole-self, community, collaboration and active learning, and it is clear that in this context, bullying will not be tolerated.

We aim:

- To ensure that all students, parents and staff are aware of the 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 a SMS community where bullying is recognised as unacceptable and where all students feel valued, secure and happy

## Definition of bullying

Bullying is any behavior carried out by an individual or a group, usually repeated over a period of time, which thoughtlessly or deliberately causes pain, suffering, unhappiness or humiliation in another who may find it difficult to defend himself or herself. Bullying takes many direct and indirect forms – verbal, psychological, emotional, physical, cyber, sexual – and it is unacceptable to bully somebody because of their race, religion, culture, gender, sexuality, special educational needs, disability, or family situation. Bullying also includes the exploitation of others, such as older students taking unfair advantage of younger ones.

## Types of bullying

Bullying may involve physical, verbal, textual, psychological or social behavior. For example:

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

*Emotional:* being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting

*Racial:* racial taunts, name calling, gestures

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

*Religious:* religious taunts, name calling.

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

*Cyber:* comments, messages or photos shared via text, email, Airdrop or social media platforms such as Tiktok, Instagram, Snapchat etc..., defamation, impersonation, cyberstalking/harassment, sharing private information

There is a special concern about cyberbullying as it can be:

*Persistent* – Digital devices offer an ability to immediately and continuously communicate 24 hours a day, so it can be difficult for children experiencing cyberbullying to find relief.

*Permanent* – Most information communicated electronically is permanent and available to the public, if not reported and removed.

*Hard to Notice* – It is hard to recognize as parents and teachers may not hear or see it.

*Breaking the Cybercrime Law* – Federal Law No.5 of 2012 on Combating Cybercrimes and its amendment by Federal Law No.12 in 2016 criminalize cybercrimes.

There are many different ways by which cyberbullying takes place and new methods for cyberbullying are emerging constantly with the development of technology.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### *School responsibilities*

- Provide access to the anti-bullying policy to all members of the school community, via Google drive, Paradigm and the school website.
- Involve staff, parents and UAE approved agencies, in supporting the procedures instigated across the school.
- Ensure 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 moral curriculum/homeroom curriculum to discuss all aspects of bullying and the appropriate way to behave towards and respect each other.
- Spread awareness on tolerance

#### *Teacher responsibilities*

- Model anti-bullying attitudes and behavior.
- Take responsibility for either teaching the anti-bullying programme or supporting it.
- Support the school values of community, respect and inclusivity.
- Listen and respond to reports of bullying, provide support and refer as needed.
- Implement the school behavior policy and anti-bullying policy.

#### *Parent responsibilities*

- Support the values of inclusivity 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.
- Follow the school behavior policy

### **Identifying bullying**

Students who are being bullied may often:

- Be late
- Have a low attendance rate
- Lose belongings
- Under-achieve
- Produce careless work
- Be isolated

- Show a change behavior e.g. withdrawal, lack of participation, change in friendship group, change in appetite, change in sleeping pattern
- Show a change in mood or attitude e.g. outbursts, constant crying

## Guidance

### *Guidance for parents*

In general, you should:

- Show a real interest in your child's social life and in school events.
- Encourage your child to have friends, to join clubs and to be tolerant of others.
- Build up your child's self-esteem by emphasizing positive features and accepting individual characteristics.
- Discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with your child,

If you are aware your child is being bullied, you should:

- Listen and try to provide an open, non-judgemental environment for your child to talk about his/her problem.
- Tell him/her you understand and give him/her support.
- Encourage your child to take action on bullying, but do not tell him/her to retaliate either physically or with name calling. Show an example by being firm but positive and not aggressive in your approach to discipline.
- If the problem seems particularly serious, or ongoing, contact the Wellbeing team immediately.
- Try to avoid an angry or emotional response. Parents should realize that actions such as phoning the parent of the bully and discussing the matter with other parents can make the situation worse.
- Trust the school to carry through actions that will solve the problem including appropriate communications with parents of all parties concerned.

If you think that your child may be bullying others, you should:

- If the school contacts you suggesting that your child may have been involved in bullying, try not to go on the defensive or to find excuses for the bullying behavior.
- Work constructively with the school to find a solution to the problem.



### *Guidance for students*

The school aims to make it easy for students to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents will be acted on. Students are encouraged through homeroom and assemblies to feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred either inside or outside school including cyber-bullying. If a student is bullied or witnesses bullying, they should immediately speak to any member of staff. Alternatively, students may speak to the school doctor, pastoral care, or the social worker.

Who can you turn to if you are bullied?

- Your parents
- Your close friends
- Your homeroom teacher or any teacher with whom you trust
- Your pastoral care or social worker
- Any member of the Senior Leadership Team

What can you yourself do if you are bullied?

- Tell the bully to stop.
- Make it clear that the behavior is unwelcome and hurtful.
- Seek help.
- Talk to someone you trust.
- Report it. Trust the school to deal with any incident in the appropriate manner.

What should you do if you know someone else is being bullied?

- Care enough to take action, whether you are personally involved or not.
- Intervene at an early stage so that the problem is dealt with before it gets out of hand.
- Have the courage to report it.

### **Protocol followed in instances of bullying**

All reported incidents will be treated seriously and fully investigated; all parties involved will be heard and given appropriate support. Where a student reports being bullied or having witnessed bullying, staff will listen carefully to what is said to ascertain the facts. Staff should only ask open questions and write down details using the student's words where possible. The note should be made within an hour of the disclosure and should be accurate and descriptive, including the date, time and place of the conversation. Staff must not promise confidentiality to a student and should inform the student that s/he will notify the relevant staff member (Wellbeing team member). An investigation will then be conducted by the



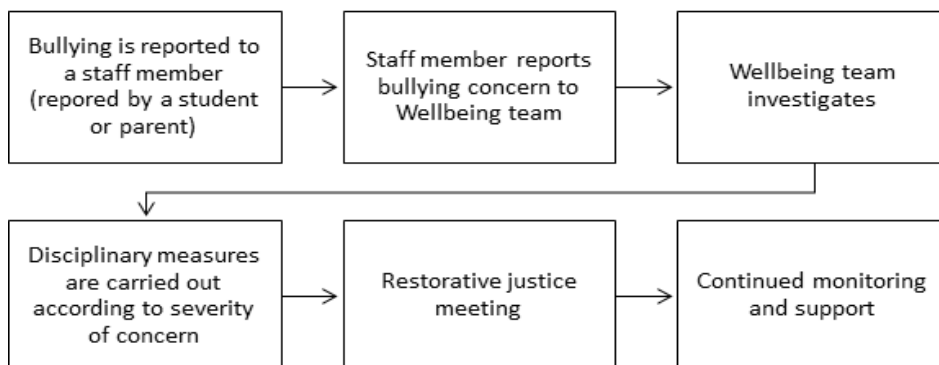
Wellbeing team. The student will then be asked to fill in an incident report with all the details discussed. Potential witnesses will be asked to provide a written statement about any incidents they have seen or been a part of.

If the incident is of a serious nature or repeated, the Designated Safeguarding Leads will be informed immediately. Any incidents involving members of staff should be reported directly to the Principal. Written records of all proceedings should be kept in school files to enable patterns to be identified. If a member of staff suspects or witnesses bullying, the incident should immediately be reported to a Wellbeing team member who will investigate as set out above.

In the case of cyberbullying, the school keeps a log of the use of school computers and such evidence may be used as part of the investigation if misuse is suspected.

When bullying is found to have occurred appropriate action will be taken to:

- Ensure the immediate safety and wellbeing of those involved.
- Provide on-going support and counseling for the individual being bullied, including support from external services where appropriate.
- Inform the individual who has been responsible for the bullying that this behavior is unacceptable.
- Counsel the individual to understand the implications of bullying.
- Consider the motivation behind the bullying and establish whether further support and/or counseling, including support from external services, are required to modify behavior. If these considerations lead to any concerns that the student who is bullying may be at risk of harm, the School's Child Protection policy will be followed.
- Advise the individual of the consequences of further bullying.
- Discipline the offender in accordance with the School's Behavior Policy.
- Inform the parents.
- Follow up with the individuals to provide any necessary support.



## Disciplinary measures

Usually parents will be invited in and appropriate action will be taken which may include a behavior management committee meeting. Disciplinary sanctions will reflect the seriousness of the incident and convey a deterrent effect. Disciplinary sanctions may include a formal warning, community service or suspension, and there may also be a requirement that the bully follows up with the social worker or with an external specialist counselor. Disciplinary action will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any special educational needs of the student and the needs of vulnerable students. In serious or repeated incidents, the outcome of the behavior management committee meeting may be required removal or expulsion.

Following the disciplinary measures taken, a restorative justice meeting will be held wherein all parties are invited, with their parents, to try to repair their relationship.

## Record Keeping

Each incident of bullying will be recorded on the student's file by the Wellbeing team and in a central register. The register will be analyzed on an annual basis to inform the annual review of safeguarding.

## Monitoring and Review

The Principal/Senior Leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Behavior Policy and the Anti-Bullying policy, and associated procedures. Both the Behavior Policy and the Anti-Bullying policy will be subject to review annually. Part of the critical review of safeguarding will include a review of the central registers of bullying incidents and analysis of incidents and trends.

## Appendices

### Appendix I

#### Wellbeing team members

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### Appendix II

#### [SMS Bullying Incident Report Form](#)