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Approval by: Principal

Anti-Bullying Policy

Revision 6 (October 2017)

Introduction

IST takes seriously any issue of bullying brought by students or parents. We have a zero tolerance (nulltolerance) to bullying and any issue will be investigated.

1. Definition

Bullying is the repeated use of an intentionally aggressive or hostile behaviour that involves an imbalance of power between the person who is bullied and the bully.

Bullying can take many forms, including but not limited to physical or verbal assaults, intimidation or non-verbal threats, social exclusion or isolation, or the use of technology or writing to convey embarrassing, slanderous, threatening, or intimidating messages. Bullying can include social exclusion or actions by more than one perpetrator, as well as harassing or intimidation behaviour in person or via social media, including texting, phone voice mail, and on-line websites.

Bullying can be categorized by but is not defined by teasing, put-downs, name-calling, or false accusations, which are repeated continuously.

Bullying behaviours can cause emotional or physical harm to the targeted student or his or her property; place the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to himself, herself, his property, or her property; create a hostile environment at school for the targeted student; infringe on the rights of the targeted student; or substantially disrupt the learning process or orderly operation of the School.

Bullying can be any one of the following:

- Emotional
- Being unfriendly, excluding or tormenting
- Physical
- Pushing, kicking or any use of violence
- Racist
- Racial taunts, graffiti or gestures
- Sexual
- Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic



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- Abusive comments
- Verbal
- Name calling
- Cyber bullying *
- Exclusion from social groups
- Personal (cultural, style, appearance, clothing etc)
- Use of language

Students who are being bullied may demonstrate changes in behaviour, for example unusual absences from school, shyness or withdrawal, nervousness, seeking adult company, or feigning illness. This can also be evident in changes in work such as lack of concentration, truancy or different work patterns.

Terminology used:

* **Cyber-Bullying** is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices, such as cell phones, computers, or the internet. It includes but is not limited to email, instant messages, text messages, and internet postings, whether on a webpage, blog, or otherwise.

A hostile environment is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe to pervasive to alter a student's educational experience.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during a bullying investigation, or witnesses bullying.

2. Policy against Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, and Retaliation

IST prohibits student-to-student behaviours characterized as bullying, an adult staff member bullying a student or another staff member, or a student bullying an adult staff member.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, activities, programs, and on school buses and at school bus stops. Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the School. In addition bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the School, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for a targeted student or students.

The School does not tolerate any form of bullying (zero tolerance) nor will we tolerate retaliation against any person who reports bullying, who provides information during an investigation of bullying, who is a witness, or has reliable information about a bullying incident. In addition, any false accusations of bullying intended to bring harm to another will also be investigated and will have consequences.

We believe that bullying behaviours are harmful to students' physical, emotional, social, psychological, and academic experiences. These behaviours negatively impact the victims, bystanders, and bullies and create a negative school climate. **The focus at IST is on a safe and good (trygt og godt) environment for students.**



3. Prevention of Bullying and Cyber-Bullying

The school addresses the aspect of bullying in a multi-faceted fashion. Efforts made at IST to prevent bullying include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Assemblies:** Assemblies are frequently used through the course of the academic year as a means to address such issues as bullying. Assemblies may run as workshops, teacher-led presentations or student-lead presentations.
- **Curriculum design:** Through the application of such IB concepts as the learner profile, we contextualise learning around matters of importance for students. This empowers to modify our flexible curriculum to fit the needs of the classes we teach. The class dynamic changes every year and our curriculum are designed to allow for such changes.
- **Training:** Training in the latest pedagogical approaches better equips staff to deal with such aspects as bullying head-on.
- **Planning and workshops:** Our collaborative planning time and in-house workshops are often designed to facilitate the demands of our current teaching environment – thus allowing us to address issues as they arise through clear channels of communication.
- **Restorative justice:** Enabling the perpetrator to see the consequence of their actions and that they have to act and take responsibility to solve the issue.

4. Measures and means of communication in the event of Bullying and Cyber-Bullying

The following steps/protocol will be taken when dealing with an incident of bullying in the school:

Step 1 Initial reaction

- Students are encouraged to talk to a member of staff or write down a complaint against bullying using the '**Worried About Being Bullied**' form located by the bully box. If bullying is suspected or reported, then the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached, or the member of staff who witnesses the event;
- It is preferable that the class teacher deals with the incident initially, though in serious cases it goes straight to the principal. An action plan should be begun and the form filled in to document information about the incident, actions and any interviews or evidence gathered.

Step 2 Recording the incident

- A clear and detailed account of the incident will be recorded in *ManageBac/student information recording system* under the discipline section and the class teacher/class tutor will be notified in writing about the incident. An action plan must be used for any case of bullying as the issue will need close follow up and action. This is also relevant when the student or parents request action. In all cases a **written warning** that the school is looking at this issue will be given to parents. The IB coordinators will be notified immediately dependent on whether the case is in PYP or MYP. Incidents that concern PYP and MYP students together should be given to both coordinators. The SEN coordinator can also be notified if the incident involves an SEN student;



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- The Principal will be notified about each issue of bullying and can keep an overview of each on behalf of the leadership team;
- The class tutor will interview each of those involved and will record the incident and what is said. A **case template** should be used to monitor each issue and these should be kept centrally in the principal's office;
- In serious incidents the principal will be both informed and involved immediately;
- Class teachers and specialists of those involved will be informed;
- Parents will be informed of what has happened and told of the consequences and action that will occur;
- If deemed necessary, the school nurse will be told of the incident and will talk to those involved;

Step 3 Action plan

- An action plan (aktivitetsplit), which is time managed and action orientated, will be constructed for monitoring those involved with follow up procedures to ensure that the incident does not happen again; parents, staff and students should be kept informed of this; if necessary, the parties involved will go on report for an agreed period of time.
- Information is given out regarding the action plan to parents. Staff are informed of action and what to look out for in class and social time. Information is sometimes given through briefings and/or weekly bulletins.

Step 4 Follow up

- The plan is reviewed and assessed within the time specified. If the bullying continues then the parents will be asked in and the principal will discuss more serious sanctions such as limited suspension.
- Written record of an agreement between the perpetrator and the victim so that the plan will be committed to and time managed in terms of follow up.
- In the event of repeated instances of bullying, the local authorities will be referred to and appropriate measures will be taken.

Please note that documentation through an action plan (aktivitetsplikt) is mandatory to any case of bullying that needs to be dealt with. Always ask for the advice of one of the leadership team if you are unsure.

5. Structure for responding to incidents of bullying

The following overview shows the media and people involved in cases:

- **Bully box** – The bully box allows students to submit their concerns in anonymity – empowering them to act where students may choose to develop a passive role.
- **Class tutor/Teacher** – The main point of contact in both PYP and MYP. The class teacher has knowledge of individual students and is in the best position to provide support.
- **IB Programme Coordinators** – Responsible for coordinating with all staff to ensure consistency in pedagogical approach and to reinforce clear channels of communication among all concerned parties. Provides support to both students and teachers as necessary and will initiate contact with 3rd party organisations where necessary.



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- **Principal** – To be notified in the case of any bullying incident, to be involved in serious cases and to monitor the index of bullying incidents throughout the school.
- **School Nurse** – A representative from the municipality who can provide additional support to students where necessary and can work closely with the school and parents to ensure students receive the necessary support.

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that bullying has no place at IST. Irrespective of whether an individual has strictly an administrative role or teaches daily, we all have a pastoral responsibility, and must be both vigilant and inform leadership if there is bullying. In this regard, those employed or working at IST have an active role to play **at all times**.

Student Council (SC) plays a proactive part in ensuring a good school environment and represents the interest and voice of students through class representatives. The principal meets with the SC every fortnight and asks specifically about the school environment, and if there are any concerns about bullying or offensive behaviour.

6. Places and areas of concern in the school

Social and common areas of the school that need close observation, particularly wherever or whenever an adult is not immediately and directly available:

- Playground
- Group work areas
- Toilets
- Corridors
- Lunchroom

Language and its use, especially in an international school, is also an area that needs a close watch. Travel to and from school is also under the jurisdiction of the school if there is a suspected incident of bullying. Cyber bullying is an area of focus in the media and staff should be vigilant regarding any issues involving students both at the school or at home.

7. Conclusion

This policy is intended to prevent bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, to give students and families confidence in the School's protocol, to encourage them to come forward whenever there is an incident or alleged bullying, and to provide appropriate discipline or corrective measures when they are found to be warranted. The policy incorporates the changes in opplæringsloven §9a in 2017 and the requirement to have an action plan to respond to any concern over a student's experience of a safe and good environment at school, or to-or-from school.

8. Notes

IST documents:



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- Anti-bullying policy
- Worried about being bullied form
- Bullying case study form (Saksbehandling)
- Bullying case index
- Offensive behaviour policy
- Duty of action plan (aktivitetsplikt)

We acknowledge the following sources in the development of this policy:

- International School of Milan, Italy
- Advent School, Moston, MA, USA
- Udir
- Opplæringsloven §9a (revision 2017)

Postscript:

The anti-bullying policy is updated and revised each year.