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Approval by: Principal

Offensive Behaviour Policy

Revision 4 (Oct 2017)

Introduction

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

1. Definition

Offensive behaviour (krenkende adferd) is the use of words, actions or media to cause offense to someone else. Media can include:

- Pictures
- Lyrics
- Images
- Clothing
- TV/film
- Literature

There is a range of levels in offensive behaviour and these are important when considering reaction and consequences. These levels may be direct or indirect, deliberate or accidental. The action may elicit a strong reaction or it might be something that builds up over time. Offensive behaviour can be any one of the following:

- Emotional
- Physical (including facial expressions, signs, physical contact, body language etc)
- Racist
- Sexual
- Homophobic



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- Faith, belief or religious background
- Xenophobic or overtly nationalistic
- Abusive comments
- Harassment
- Intimidation (including blackmail, aggression etc)
- Threats
- Verbal
- Name calling
- Exclusion from social groups, ignoring or ostracizing others
- Vandalism and destruction of property
- Personal (cultural, style, appearance, clothing, skill level, knowledge etc)
- Use of language (in English, Norwegian or any other language)
- Negativity

In an international school environment, there are numerous factors that can cause offence and it is important to monitor this issue and not let a system become used as a weapon to have power over others.

In order that the number of cases does not become overwhelming, the offensive behaviour form should only be used for serious issues where the victim feels offended and wishes to take the issue further. Generally most issues of offensive behaviour will be handled quickly, in the class setting, by the class or subject teacher, and with prompt corrective measures.

2. Policy against offensive behaviour

IST prohibits all offensive behaviour to any of the community, be these individual students, groups of students or adults (staff, parent or visitors). We believe that offensive behaviour is harmful to students' physical, emotional, social, psychological, and academic experiences. These behaviours negatively impact the victims, bystanders, and perpetrators and create a negative school climate.

3. Prevention of offensive behaviour

Like bullying, the school addresses offensive behaviour in a multi-faceted fashion. Efforts made at IST to prevent such behaviours 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 and discuss both positive and negative behaviour. 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 and the IB attitudes, we contextualise learning around matters of importance for students. This means that the social aspect of the IB programmes is used to educate and deal with issues of offensive behaviour at a classroom level. It is integral with the whole curriculum and the IB philosophy.
- **Training:** Training in the latest pedagogical approaches better equips staff to deal with such aspects as offensive behaviour.



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- **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
- **Parent-school liaison:** Working directly with the FAU, parents and the home to ensure that positive behaviour is encouraged and modelled.
- **Student Council (SC):** To give students a voice and to address issues or general concerns quickly through class reps. The principal meets with the SC every fortnight and both the school environment and offensive behaviour are brought up for comment and discussion.

4. Steps to use in the event of offensive behaviour

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

Step 1 Initial reaction to offensive behaviour concern

- Students should **talk** to a member of staff or their parents if they feel they have been offended and this gives a student voice and the right to be heard;
- The staff member should investigate and ascertain evidence of offensive behaviour. If there is no evidence then there is no further action to take. The information should be documented, however.

Step 2 Evidence of offensive behaviour

- If there is evidence of offensive behaviour then this should be collected and recorded on *ManageBac/student information recording system* and also dealt with by the teacher at class level;
- The teacher makes a judgment call in assessing the nature of level of behaviour and can ask the principal, coordinator or another member of the leadership team for advice;
- Parents must be contacted by phone or at the least email to be given information;
- Most instances of offensive behaviour should be dealt with at this level.

Step 3 Sending the advanced notice of investigation

- If the case is more serious and if the parents request action then the matter is handed to the school leadership team;
- Request for action by a student or parents is treated as an action plan (aktivitetsplikt) for the school;
- The member of staff will then give this information to the principal;
- The parents and student concerned are sent an **advanced notice (förhåndsvarsel)** by the member of staff responsible for the case to explain that it will be looked at seriously by the school;
- This advanced notice is a written letter, stating the issue and that an investigation is being put in place;
- The investigation will be coordinated by the **principal** who will assign a member of staff responsible for action and follow up;
- It is preferable that the class teacher deals with the incident initially, though in serious cases it goes



straight to the principal.

Step 4 Action form and recording the incident

- The concern and details should be written on the **action form** located on the g-drive by the member of staff responsible;
- A clear and detailed account of the incident can be recorded in *ManageBac/student information recording system* under the discipline tab if it is to do with a student offending someone else and the class teacher/class tutor will be notified in writing about the incident. The IB programme 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 as information. The SEN coordinator will also be notified if it is an SEN student;
- In serious incidents the principal will always be informed directly;
- Class teachers and specialists of those involved will be informed.

Step 5 Action

- **Parents will be informed** of what has happened and told of the consequences and action that will occur, via the action section of the action form (aktivitetsplikt);
- The action form will be kept in the student's folder;
- If deemed necessary, the school nurse will be told of the incident and will talk to those involved;
- The action plan is time managed and 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.

Step 6 Follow up to the concern

- A **follow up meeting** will be arranged by a member of the leadership team to check and assess whether this issue has been dealt with appropriately;
- If the offensive behaviour continues then the principal will discuss more serious sanctions;
- Parents and students have the right to take the matter further if they are not satisfied and this would be as an appeal against the action;
- In the advent of an appeal by parents, the matter is then passed on to fylkesmannen.

Please note that documentation is mandatory to any case that needs to be dealt with either via *ManageBac/student information recording system* or as an action form if it is taken further. Always ask for the advice of a senior member of staff (LT or IB coordinators) if you are unsure.

5. Who's who and media used when responding to incidents of offensive behaviour

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

- **Class tutor/Teacher** – An essential point of contact in both PYP and MYP who have extended contact with the students and are in the best position to provide support. One-to-one termly conversations between teachers and students is an important aspect of monitoring individual wellbeing.



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- **IB Programme Coordinators** – Responsible for coordinating with staff in each school section 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.
- **Principal** – To be involved in serious cases and to monitor the index of offensive behaviour incidents throughout the school. Should be informed of all cases of offensive behaviour that require action.
- **School Nurse** – A representative from the municipality who can provide additional support to students where necessary and can work closely with the pastoral leader to ensure students receive the necessary support.
- **Bully box** – The bully box allows students to submit their concerns about bullying in anonymity – empowering them to act where students may choose to develop a passive role. This box should be used if the offensive behaviour issue is more a case of bullying (see **IST anti-bullying policy** and bullying definition).

All staff have a responsibility, at all times, to model excellent behaviour to others and to deal proactively and directly with offensive behaviour. Irrespective of whether an individual has strictly an administrative role or teaches daily, we all have a pastoral responsibility. In this regard all employed at the International School Telemark have an active role to play **at all times**. It is also critical that issues are dealt with quickly, proactively and at the lowest level to avoid escalation. Incidents of offensive behaviour must be reported to management and the principal must be involved where the incident is serious and goes to step 3.

6. Places and areas of concern in the school

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

Classrooms and outside areas need attention and students often report that these areas are where they experience trouble. Language, actions and media, especially in an international school, are areas that need a close watch. Travel to and from school is also under the jurisdiction of the school if there is a suspected incident of offensive behaviour.

7. Internal communication

Communication of incidents and action should be done to other staff via:



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- One-to-one conversation
- Weekly bulletin
- Monday briefing
- Staff meetings
- Email memos

8. Conclusion

This policy is intended to ensure an excellent and positive school environment for all students. It is also to give students and parents' confidence in the school's protocol, to encourage them to come forward whenever there is an incident or alleged concern, and to provide appropriate discipline or corrective measures when they are found to be warranted. *Stamina Helse* can be involved for advice and support.

8. Notes

IST documents:

- Offensive behaviour policy
- Offensive behaviour form
- Staff handbook
- Parents' Guide

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

- IST anti-bullying policy
- Comments and suggestions from IST students during 2016-2017
- Comments and suggestions from IST staff
- Udir statutes and opplæringsloven §9a (revision 2017)
- Elevundersøkelsen 2016

Postscript:

The offensive behaviour policy is updated and revised each year.

9. Cyclic flow chart of procedural steps

- Issue raised
- Evidence
- Warning
- Action plan



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- Investigation
- Action instigated
- Follow up
- Appeal
- Closure