

## ISM - Anti-Bullying Policy

### UNICEF Rights of the Child

ISM is a UNICEF Rights Respecting School. We aim to protect and promote the rights of ALL children. The rights of the child guide our thinking in the formulation and application of our school policies and practice.

### Introduction

At ISM, we want all children to enjoy school and develop a love of learning. We aim to nurture and develop in our students' self-esteem, emotional resilience, positive social relationships and independence. As a school community, we recognise that bullying of any sort is unacceptable. We take the prevention of bullying and dealing with any incidents seriously, framing our interventions to bring about positive changes in behaviour. This policy outlines procedures related to bullying that we put in place in order to ensure that the ISM ethos and values can be achieved by everyone.

### ISM values

The unequivocal UNICEF Rights of the Child are the foundation of our school and the basis for the six school values that we follow across both primary and secondary: Respect, honesty, kindness, responsibility, cooperation and resilience. These values underpin our approach to dealing with bullying. We believe that it is unacceptable to cause harm to others. Accordingly, students are taught

- **That all bullying, of any sort, is unacceptable.**
- **How to seek support if they feel they are being bullied.**
- **What to do if they think another student may be being bullied**

Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

### What is Bullying?

Bullying involves an imbalance of power, is often premeditated and usually forms a pattern of behaviour. Bullying is therefore:

- Deliberately upsetting
- Recurring, often over a period of time
- Difficult to stand up against

### Bullying can take many forms, but the main types are:

- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Verbal: name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks
- Racist: racial taunts, gestures
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic: because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Cyber: using social media, emails, texts and phone calls to harass or to spread rumours
- Indirect: spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made

the subject of malicious rumours.

### **What bullying is not**

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention.

- Mutual Conflict - In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem
- Single episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation - Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied
- Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying. However, since we have a duty of care to provide a student with a safe and supportive school environment, single episodes will be dealt with through our behaviour policy

### **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who bully need to learn different ways of behaving.

We have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable. We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety. This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur. We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities should incidents arise.

- All members of the school community should understand what bullying is
- All teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported
- All students and parents should know what they should do if bullying arises
- As a school we take bullying seriously, students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported
- Bullying will not be tolerated

### **Signs and Symptoms**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. For example, if a child:

- is frightened to go out on their own
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic) or begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence

- starts stuttering
  - attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
  - cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
  - feels ill in the morning
  - begins to do poorly in schoolwork
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- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
  - has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
  - asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
  - has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
  - has unexplained cuts or bruises
  - becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
  - is bullying other children or siblings
  - stops eating
  - is frightened to say what's wrong
  - gives improbable excuses for any of the above
  - is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
  - is nervous or jumpy when a text message is received

**These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered one of the possibilities and should be investigated.**

### **Procedures**

All reports will be taken seriously and will be followed up by the class teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Often, concerns that have been raised may require further investigation. This may include talking to other adults who work with the children involved or interviewing students.

- Incidents will be logged and statements taken/reflection sheets completed by all parties as stated in the school's behaviour policy.
- Parents/ carers should be informed and kept up-to-date on any developments
- Parents/carers maybe be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem

### **Interventions**

Our interventions constitute a process designed to bring about real change in behaviours

- The victim of bullying will be supported appropriately and helped to feel safe again
- The bully (bullies) will be helped to change their behaviours through appropriate interventions
- The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise and take part in restorative actions
- If possible, the students will be reconciled
- The students concerned will be monitored to ensure further bullying does not take place
- In extreme cases, students may be removed from class pending resolution

### **Prevention strategies**

We will use appropriate methods for helping children to prevent bullying. Our Personal, Health, Social Education (PHSE) curriculum deals with the subject of bullying in ways that the children can understand. In the programme and at other times, students will be regularly reminded about the effects that bullying has on the victims, especially the harm that such acts can cause. Students are strongly encouraged to tell an adult if they feel that someone is bullying them. They know that they must do this as a matter of urgency and not hold back thereby hoping that the problem will go away. Students are encouraged to report bullying in schools.

**Tools and strategies** may include:

- signing a behaviour contract
- concept cartoons
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- role-plays
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters, circle time

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **The role of Parents/ Carers**

Parents/ carers who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately. Parents have the responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school. It is important to ask open-ended questions such as Tell me what happened? What were you doing just before that happened? What was the other person doing? What happened next?

#### **The role of the Staff**

Staff take all forms of bullying seriously and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place. They record any incidents in the behaviour log and email a senior member of staff. The staff ensures that all students know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school. The staff draws the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments. For example, if an incident occurs, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher may decide to use assembly as a forum in which to discuss with other children why this behaviour was wrong. If staff become aware of an act of bullying, they do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. The member of staff will deal with the incident immediately in line with this and our behaviour policy. A clear account of the incident will be written and given to members of the senior team.

#### **The role of Senior Staff**

It is the responsibility of the Senior staff to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying. The Headteacher is also responsible for ensuring that parents are made aware of our approach to preventing and dealing with incidents of bullying.



Policies and procedures, together with behaviour logs and reflection sheets will be reviewed periodically to ensure effectiveness.

Students will be asked for their input into our approach. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

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