

## Anti-Bullying Policy

International School Leiden is committed to every child and member of staff's success in working within a caring, responsive and safe environment that is free of any kind of discrimination and bullying. Our school works to ensure that all staff and children have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Everyone in our school has a right to:

- Work and learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

At International School Leiden, we know that bullying can threaten a student's physical and emotional safety at school and can negatively impact on their ability to perform to the best of their ability. We believe that the best way to address bullying is to **stop it before it starts** and establish a climate in which bullying is not acceptable. It is important for everyone in the school community to work together to send a unified message against bullying. At International School Leiden, there is a school culture of acceptance, tolerance and respect. We use staff meetings, assemblies, parent meetings, circle time, IPC and drama lessons, newsletters to families, and the school website to establish a positive climate at school. We behave as good role models and all staff members are responsible for the safety and well-being of all children.

### **A Definition of Bullying:**

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

This policy is aimed at ensuring all staff and parents know how our school deals with instances of bullying behaviour amongst our children and what steps they can take to prevent it or deal with it effectively if it occurs.

**NB SCOL has its own policy for all staff that work within its organisation.**

### **The roles students play:**

There are many roles that students can play. Students can bully others, they can be bullied, or they may witness bullying. When students are involved in bullying, they often play more than one role. Sometimes students may both be bullied and bully others or they may witness other students being

bullied. It is important to understand the multiple roles students play in order to effectively prevent and respond to bullying.

### Students involved in bullying:

The roles students play in bullying are not limited to those who bully others and those who are bullied. Some researchers talk about the "circle of bullying" to define both those directly involved in bullying and those who actively or passively assist the behaviour or defend against it. Direct roles include:

- **Students who bully:** These students engage in bullying behaviour towards their peers. There are many risk factors that may contribute to the child's involvement in the behaviour. Often, these children require support to change their behaviour and address any other challenges that may be influencing their behaviour.
- **Students who are bullied:** These students are the targets of bullying behaviour. Some factors put children at more risk of being bullied, but not all children will be bullied. Sometimes, these students may need help learning how to respond to bullying.

Even if a student is not directly involved in bullying, they may be contributing to the behaviour. Witnessing the behaviour may also affect the child, so it is important for them to learn what they should do when they see bullying happen. Roles students play when they witness bullying include:

- **students who assist:** These children may not start the bullying or lead in the bullying behaviour, but serve as an "assistant" to children who are bullying. These children may encourage the bullying behaviour and occasionally join in.
- **students who reinforce:** These children are not directly involved in the bullying behaviour but they give the bullying an audience. They will often laugh or provide support for the children who are engaging in bullying. This may encourage the bullying to continue.
- **Outsiders:** These students remain separate from the bullying situation. They neither reinforce the bullying behaviour nor defend the child being bullied. Some may watch what is going on but do not provide feedback about the situation to show they are on anyone's side. Even so, providing an audience may encourage bullying behaviour. These children often want to help, but don't know how.
- **students who defend:** These students actively comfort the student being bullied and may come to the students defence when bullying occurs.

Most students play more than one role in bullying over time. In some cases, they may be directly involved in bullying as the one bullying others or being bullied and in others they may witness bullying

and play an assisting or defending role. Every situation is different. Some students are both bullied and bully others. It is important to notice the multiple roles children play.

### Students at risk of being bullied

Generally, children who are bullied have one or more of the following risk factors:

- Are perceived as different from their peers, such as being overweight or underweight, wearing glasses or different clothing, being new to a school, or being unable to afford what kids consider “cool”
- Are perceived as weak or unable to defend themselves
- Are depressed, anxious, or have low self-esteem
- Are less popular than others and have few friends
- Do not get along well with others, seen as annoying or provoking, or antagonise others for attention

However, even if a child has these risk factors, it does not mean that he/she will be bullied. In addition, these risk factors may not be present and a child may still be bullied.

### Students who are more likely to bully others

There are two types of children who are more likely to bully others:

- Some are well-connected to their peers, have social power, are overly concerned about their popularity, and like to dominate or be in charge of others.
- Others are more isolated from their peers and may be depressed or anxious, have low self-esteem, be less involved in school, be easily pressured by peers, or not identify with the emotions or feelings of others.

Students who have these factors are also more likely to bully others;

- Are aggressive or easily frustrated
- Have less parental involvement or having issues at home
- Think badly of others
- Have difficulty following rules
- View violence in a positive way
- Have friends who bully others

Remember, those who bully others do not need to be stronger or bigger than those they bully. The power imbalance can come from a number of sources, such as popularity, strength, cognitive ability. Students who bully may have more than one of these characteristics.

## Preventing Bullying

Parents and teachers should be aware of the following:

Signs a student is being bullied

Look for changes in the student. However, be aware that not all students who are bullied exhibit warning signs. Some signs that may point to a bullying problem are:

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewellery
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating. Students may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Lack of progress, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem

Signs a student is bullying others

Students may be bullying others if they:

- Get into physical or verbal fights
- Have friends who bully others
- Are increasingly aggressive
- Have unexplained extra money or new belongings
- Blame others for their problems
- Don't accept responsibility for their actions
- Are overly competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity

## Why don't students ask for help?

Statistics show that an adult was notified in less than half (40%) of bullying incidents. Students **do not** tell adults for many reasons:

- Bullying can make a student feel helpless. Children may want to handle it on their own to feel in control again. They may fear being seen as weak or a tell-tale.
- Students may fear backlash from the child who bullied them.

- Bullying can be a humiliating experience. Children may not want adults to know what is being said about them, whether true or false. They may also fear that adults will judge them or punish them for being weak.
- Students who are bullied may already feel socially isolated. They may feel like no-one cares or could understand.
- Students may fear being rejected by their peers. Friends can help protect students from bullying and students can fear losing this support.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching, taking and/or breaking someone’s things etc.
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling, mimicking.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online /cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
- Indirect - Can include the exploitation of individuals.

### **Where and when bullying happens**

Bullying can occur during or after school hours. While most reported bullying happens in the school building, a significant percentage also happens in places like the playground, the neighbourhood, or on the Internet.

Report Bullying (and encourage the children to report it).

When bullying happens, it is important to document and report the behaviour so it can be addressed.

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.

### **Why Cyberbullying is Different**

Students who are being cyberbullied are often bullied in person as well. Additionally, students who are cyberbullied have a harder time getting away from the behaviour.

- Cyberbullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and reach a student even when he or she is alone. It can happen any time of the day or night.
- Cyberbullying messages and images can be posted anonymously and distributed quickly to a very wide audience. It can be difficult and sometimes impossible to trace the source.
- Deleting inappropriate or harassing messages, texts and pictures is extremely difficult after they have been posted or sent.
- Being left out of social events online deliberately can be hard to spot and difficult to prove.

### Parents, be aware of what your children are doing online!

We encourage all parents to talk with their children about cyberbullying and other online issues regularly.

Parents and teachers at International School Leiden should:

- Know the sites students visit and their online activities.
- Ask where they're going, what they're doing and who they're doing it with.
- Be clear about what sites they can visit and what they are permitted to do when they're online. Show them how to be safe online.
- Use parental controls on television programme settings and other devices.
- Teach them not to share anything that could hurt or embarrass themselves or others. Once something is posted, it is out of their control.
- Tell them that as a responsible parent and teacher you will review their online communications on a regular basis.
- Have a sense of what the children do online and what they communicate in texts.
- Tell them to keep their passwords safe and not share them.
- Know their passwords
- Encourage them to tell you immediately if they, or someone they know, is being cyberbullied.
- Adhere to age restrictions on social media sites/television programmes/movies etc.

### Report Cyberbullying

When cyberbullying happens, it is important to document and report the behaviour so it can be addressed.

#### Steps to take immediately:

- Don't respond to and don't forward cyberbullying messages.
- Keep evidence of cyberbullying. Record the dates, times, and descriptions of instances when cyberbullying has occurred. Save and print screenshots, emails, and text messages. Use this evidence to report cyberbullying to web and cell phone service providers.

- Block the person who is cyberbullying.
- Report cyberbullying to online service providers.
- Report cyberbullying to the social media site so they can take action against users abusing the terms of service.
- Report cyberbullying to the police if there are threats of violence, sexually explicit messages or photos, stalking etc.
- Report cyberbullying immediately to the Head of school.

### **Responding to Bullying**

We respond quickly and consistently to bullying behaviour and send the message that it is not acceptable.

International School Leiden will always:

- Intervene immediately.
- Make sure everyone is safe and separate the children involved.
- Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
- Stay calm and reassure the children involved, including bystanders.
- Tell the pupil/s being bullied that we are taking it seriously, it's not their fault and they don't have to put up with bullying.
- Inform the pupil/s being bullied what we will do next.
- Model respectful behaviour at all times.

### **How we support students who are bullied:**

- We listen and focus on the student. We ask what has been going on and show we want to help.
- We ask the student/s being bullied how they're feeling and what can be done to make them feel safe.
- We develop a strategy together with the target and ensure they are happy with our agreed way forward.
- The parents will be informed and we will maintain open communication between our school and the parents.
- We recognise that bullying may not end overnight. We are committed to making it stop and promise to consistently support the target/s by checking in regularly with the target/s.

### **We consider the following questions:**

- Do they have a discreet way to report to us about how they are feeling at school regularly?
- Have we talked to parents/carers?

- Is our response built upon changing the behaviour of the group and not solely on changing the behaviour of the target/s? This is important to avoid sending a message to the target that the bullying is their fault.

#### **How we address bullying behaviour:**

- We make sure the student knows what the problem is and that they must change their behaviour as it is wrong and harms others.
- We show the student that bullying is taken seriously by calmly telling the student that bullying will not be tolerated.
- We model respectful behaviour when addressing the problem.
- We work with the student to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied someone.
- We involve the student who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. Our goal is to help them see how their actions affect others.
- We will record names based on the roles involved in bullying, how they were involved and what we could do to change their behaviour, NB This would be completed in partnership with those involved and parents as applicable. It is a tool to help with influencing more positive behaviours and reviewing with those involved. Should it be deemed a safeguarding issue, it will be handled accordingly. This information will be accessible on a need to know basis.
- IPC topics will be used to develop positive behaviour. The development of personal skills, such as respect and empathy, are at the heart of our ethos.
- We will make it clear what steps we are taking with those involved.
- We will seek agreement from all those involved about the way forward. Sometimes this could be done with a signed agreement by those involved or simply a conversation but it is important to record this agreement.
- We will inform parents and maintain communication throughout this process to ensure a team approach.

#### **School Learning and Reflection**

Questions to ask ourselves as a school

- What has this incident taught us?
- Does this reveal any issues in school? E.g. do we have an issue with language in school or an area within the school which needs more adult supervision
- Do staff need any training? Remember to think across the whole staff team and include after school club providers and break time staff. This is an important step. It allows us to reflect upon our school practice to ascertain if there is anything we can do to prevent a similar situation in the future.
- Do we need to refresh our school policy and procedures? Have we identified any gaps?



- Do parents have a good understanding of what bullying is and isn't?
- Do they know the school approach to anti-bullying?
- What needs to happen/who do you need to speak to in order to make this happen? By when and how?