Anti-bullying Policy

Introduction

At the International School of Toulouse we believe that all forms of bullying including physical hurting, threatening verbal behaviour and intimidation, purposeful exclusion and cyber-bullying are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We aim to tackle bullying by trying to prevent it from happening in the first place and by acting consistently, fairly and effectively when it does. We aim to help children develop empathy and we teach the skills, understanding and confidence to recognise and act when they see or experience bullying.

Aims

- To create a caring and compassionate community within the school
- To provide for all a safe, supportive learning and work environment free from threat or fear.
- To create a school culture where bullying is unacceptable to staff, students, parents and carers.
- To ensure that all members of the school community have the confidence to be able to disclose and discuss bullying if it does occur.
- To develop procedures for noting, reporting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To meet any legal obligations which rest with the school.

What is bullying?

The School decides what constitutes bullying and what does not. Possible traits that may be targeted for bullying are as follows:

- Appearance
- Health conditions
- Special educational needs (SEN) or disability
- Culture or class
- Race
- Gender stereotyping
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Related to home or other personal circumstances

We recognise that not all apparent cases of perceived bullying are deliberate or aggressive, but may be the result of unthinking acts in which actions or comments are made in the belief that they are amusing without any realisation of the distress caused. These instances are to be treated seriously but not necessarily with the same severity as obviously intentional acts of bullying. The following list is a guide of how we may decide if bullying has taken place:

- A person or group exerting power over the victim, making them feel miserable, frightened, hurt and isolated. It can involve physical aggression, verbal harassment, purposeful exclusion or cyber-bullying.

- It is a repeated action and goes on over time.

- It is deliberate, intentional and not accidental.

Forms which bullying may take

The following list is not exhaustive:

- Verbal Insults, threats and intimidation
- Physical Threats and/or harm
- Obscene Words and/or Gestures
- Harassment
- Vilification / defamation
- Exclusion or peer rejection
- Impersonation
- Unauthorised publication of private information or images
- Manipulation
- Cyberbullying (see Appendix 1)

Procedures for noting and reporting an incident of bullying

- Parents, students and staff are encouraged to report instances of bullying (see Appendix 3, 4 & 5). All reports of suspected bullying, no matter how trivial, will be investigated and dealt with.

- All reports of suspected bullying should be reported to a member of staff who will then pass this information on to the appropriate person.

- Serious cases of bullying will be referred to the Head of Primary or Head of Secondary.

Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

1. When analysing incidents of bullying, teachers will seek answers to questions of: what, where, when, who and why.
2. If a group is involved, each member may be spoken to separately. Other students may also be spoken to in order to get a clearer picture of the incident itself and any other contributory factors.
3. Written records of any bullying incidents, including evidence, may be kept by the School in the relevant student files.
4. In cases where it has been determined that bullying has occurred, the parents/carers of both parties will be informed. Separate follow-up meetings with both parties may also be arranged.
5. The following order of sanctions may be used in cases of bullying. However, each case will be dealt with on an individual basis.
   - Verbal warning

- Behaviour Report
- Suspension from the playground / removal of privileges
- After school detention
- Internal exclusion
- Removal of school laptop and banning use of mobile device (in the case of cyberbullying)
- Temporary exclusion from school
- Permanent exclusion from school – following the procedures stated in School Policies.

In the case of cyber-bullying, the additional actions may be required:
- Organising the removal of upsetting material from social media, message boards, websites or computers and mobile phones.
- Contacting the service provider or host to request that material is removed.
- Blocking certain email addresses.

6. Both the 'victim' and 'victimiser' will be supported and may be required to receive intervention from external specialists/educational psychologist (see Appendix 2).

Bullying outside of School

Generally, incidents of bullying outside of school may take a number of forms, the main ones being exclusion or cyber-bullying.

We work hard to promote a culture of inclusion within school and, as with other areas of school life, our aim is that this transcends beyond the school gates.

In cases where we are informed about possible incidents of bullying outside of school, we follow the procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying as outlined above. Where appropriate we address issues through our pastoral programmes and close communication between school and home is a key factor in this.

Legal implications

The French Moral Harassment law has made harassment itself illegal. The definition of harassment applies if it happens by any means, such as in-person, by emails, SMS text messages, bullying using social media, or telephone calls. The French law prohibits using any repetitive words or behaviours that lead to the deterioration of the physical or mental health of any person. The definition of harassment includes repetitive:
- Verbal Insults
- Physical Threats
- Obscene Words and/or Gestures

Dealing with acts of bullying could therefore result in the involvement of the police.

Responsibility

We believe that everyone has a responsibility to combat all types of bullying.

The School has a responsibility to keep students and staff safe within the school environment and parents have this responsibility towards their children at all other times.

Further clarification can be found in the following appendices:

Appendix 1 - Features of cyberbullying

Appendix 2 - Support for the person being bullied

Appendix 3 - Advice to Parents

Appendix 4 - Advice to Students

Appendix 5 - Advice to Staff

Responsibility:	School Leadership Group
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Appendices (cyber-bullying)

Appendix 1 - Features of cyberbullying

Cyber-bullying is a form of bullying that involves the use of Information and communications technology. The following are some potential categories of cyber bullying:

- Text message bullying: involves sending texts that are threatening or cause discomfort.
- Picture/video bullying via mobile 'phones: used to make a person feel threatened or embarrassed.
- Mobile phone bullying: uses silent calls or abusive messages. Often the person disguises their number and sometimes uses another person's phone to send the messages.
- Email bullying: uses emails to send bullying or threatening messages often using a false name or someone else to pin the blame on them.
- Chat room bullying: involves sending menacing or upsetting responses to children when they are in a web-based chat room.
- Bullying via instant messaging: an internet based form of bullying where children are sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real-time conversations online.
- Bullying via web sites: includes the use of defamatory blogs and personal websites.

- impact: the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than other forms of bullying
- targets and perpetrators: the people involved may have a different profile to traditional bullies and their targets
- location: the 24/7 and anywhere nature of cyberbullying
- anonymity: the person being bullied will not always know who is bullying them
- intent: some students may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying
- evidence: unlike other forms of bullying, the target of the bullying will have evidence of its occurrence
- it is possible that a member of staff may be a victim and these responses apply to them too

Appendix 2 - Support for the person being bullied

- Offer emotional support; reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling someone
- Advise the person not to retaliate or reply. Instead, keep the evidence and take it to their parent or a member of staff (in the case of staff they should take it to their line manager)
- Advise the person to consider what information they have in the public domain
- If hurtful or embarrassing content is being distributed, try to get it removed from the web. If the person who posted it is known, ensure they understand why it is wrong and ask them to remove it. Alternatively, contact the host provider and make a report to get the content taken down.

● In some cases, the person being bullied may be able to block the person bullying from their sites and services.

Appendix 3 - Advice to Parents
● Think very carefully about whether your child needs a mobile phone at their age.
● Take an interest by talking to your children about their use of technology. Use it as an opportunity to learn.
● Make sure they know what to do if they or someone they know are being cyberbullied. Use this strategy: stop, block, record, talk it out.
● Parental control software can be helpful for blocking access and restricting use.
● Make it your business to know what your child is doing online and who your child's online friends are.
● Consider keeping computers and mobile devices in a public place in your house. Check what your child is doing at odd times. Discuss the internet activities your child enjoys.
● Tell your child that you check their computer usage.
● Tell your child that you will check their private communication if you feel that they are behaving irresponsibly.

Appendix 4 - Advice to Students
● Always respect others and think before you send. What you think of as a joke may cause hurt to someone else.
● Passwords - do not let anyone know your passwords and change them often. Choose hard to guess words with symbols and numbers. Remember to give your mobile telephone number or personal website address only to your trusted friends.
● Block the Bully - most good websites allow you to block or report someone who is behaving badly. Make use of these functions as they are there to keep you safe.
● Don't retaliate or reply! Replying to bullying messages, particularly in anger, is just what the bully wants. Report to an adult who you can trust.
● Save the evidence. Keep all offensive messages, pictures or on-line conversations. These will give you the evidence you need to show what is happening to you.
● Make sure you tell someone. You have no right to be bullied or upset. There are people who can help you:
    ● Parent / guardian
    ● Your teacher
    ● An adult you can trust
    ● Your mobile operator or social network provider. Their website will tell you how you can report it
● Don't be a silent bystander. If you see or know about someone being bullied then you should report it.

Appendix 5 - Advice to Staff

- One of the characteristics of cyberbullying is that it has the potential, by its anonymity, to affect staff as they may become the target of acts of cyberbullying. The perpetrator may not be older or in a position of authority in order to bully an individual. Staff therefore have a responsibility to protect themselves from cyberbullying as far as possible.
- Be alert to a student seeming upset after using the internet or their mobile phone. This might involve subtle comments or changes in relationships with friends. Please also note they might be particularly unwilling to talk, or be secretive about online or mobile phone problems.
- Be aware, a student may as likely cyber bully as be a target of cyber bullying.
- Talk with students and understand the ways in which they are using the internet and their mobile phone.
- Remind students not to retaliate.
- Keep the evidence of offending emails, text messages or online conversations and pass them on to the Head of Primary/Secondary or Secondary Grade Coordinator.
- Report all forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying or suspected-cyber bullying at all times.
- Staff should be sensitive to the feelings of the bullied individual, who may find the evidence retrieved to be upsetting or very embarrassing. Students should be assured of discretion in dealing with such material as part of the upsetting nature of cyberbullying is the perception that 'everyone' is aware of such images or upsetting text.

Images and video

- Check parental permission before sharing images of students online.
- Staff should be wary of allowing themselves to be photographed or videoed in unusual situations, however innocent they may seem, as these images could be used to ridicule or humiliate the subject at any point in the future.
- Significant information, such as full names, must not be attached to any images posted.
- Any picture which causes distress to an individual, for any reason, must be removed straight away.

Mobile Phones

- Staff should be aware at all times of the increasing sophistication of mobile phones and their use in capturing information and uploading content to the internet.
- Staff should take good care of their own phones at all times due to the amount of sensitive information they now contain. Phones should never be left unattended and should be locked with a security code when not in use.
- Staff should not lend their mobile phone to students – even in an emergency. It is more prudent to make the call for the student. However, if a personal mobile phone has to be lent to a student, the call should be supervised at all times and any numbers used deleted from the phone straight away.

- Staff should not give students or parents their personal mobile phone number (or personal email address). If a member of staff believes students or parents have obtained and are abusing either their personal mobile phone number or personal email address, these contact details should be changed and kept confidential.

Social Networking Sites
- Staff should be mindful of how they present information about themselves on the internet, particularly in relation to images and personal information to which anyone could gain access and use inappropriately.
- Staff using such sites should ensure that they are aware of how to restrict access to their information online on the sites they use. In cases of uncertainty, staff are advised to treat all information as accessible to the public.
- Staff should not befriend current students on social networking sites and should be aware, if befriending ex-students, of the relationships which may exist between current and ex-students and how this may potentially allow current students to access personal information.
- For the same reasons, staff are advised not to befriend parents of students.
- Staff should occasionally use search engines to check what information is available about them in the public domain.

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