



# GEMS Winchester School Dubai



## Anti-Bullying Policy

**Person(s) Responsible:** Head of Primary; Head of Secondary

**Approved by ELT:** January 2023

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## 1. Introduction

At GEMS Winchester School Dubai (WSD), we aim to create a caring, safe and nurturing environment that promotes mutual respect and trust. We recognise that all forms of bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals, can create barriers to learning, and have serious consequences on mental wellbeing. By preventing and tackling bullying effectively, we can help to create a safe and disciplined environment where students are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

This policy applies to all forms of bullying and outlines the ways we aim to keep the students at WSD safe, secure and successful. This is done by:

- Protecting students from bullying in order to provide a caring, safe and nurturing environment
- Identifying all signs of bullying and taking pre-emptive, prompt and appropriate action to stop it
- Implementing clear and robust systems for responding to any incidents of bullying
- Developing confidence in students to stand up against bullying and to report any incidents

Our community:

- Monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy and practice on a regular basis
- Supports staff to promote positive relationships to help prevent bullying
- Recognises that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; being aware of this helps us to develop effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provides appropriate support if required
- Intervenes by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly
- Ensures our students are aware that bullying concerns is dealt with sensitively and effectively - that everyone should feel safe to learn and abide by the anti-bullying policy
- Requires all members of the community to work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- Reports back to parents/caregivers regarding concerns of bullying and will deal promptly with complaints
- Seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere
- Utilises support from other relevant organisations when appropriate

Bullying is recognised by WSD as being a form of peer-on peer-abuse. It can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development. Bullying can happen to anyone.

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## 2. Definition of Bullying

WSD defines bullying as an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. It can happen face-to-face or online. Bullying is not defined by: single episodes of social rejection or dislike; single acts of nastiness; random acts of aggression or intimidation; disagreements or fights. These actions can undoubtedly cause great distress, however they do not fit the definition of bullying unless they are being deliberately and repeatedly done.

Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, taking belongings, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, excluding people from groups, and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, referred to as cyberbullying. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text,

instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and applications, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.

This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including:

Type of Bullying	Definition
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another's belongings, any use of violence
Prejudice-based and discriminatory, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Racial</li><li>• Faith-based</li><li>• Gendered</li><li>• Disability-based</li></ul>	Taunts, gestures, graffiti or physical abuse focused on a particular characteristic (e.g. gender, race)
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, or inappropriate touching
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber-bullying	Bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites

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### 3. Dealing with Bullying

Teachers will respond to all episodes of bullying in order to send a clear message that it is unacceptable. Different responses may be appropriate depending on the nature and degree of the bullying. Any student or family can report an incident of bullying by contacting the Form Tutor, Head of Year or relevant member of SLT. Once staff become aware of a bullying allegation, they should take a written statement and contact the appropriate colleague (for example, the Head of Year or relevant Assistant Principal).

Initially, the questions identified below will be used to determine if the incident is primarily bullying or if it falls into another sanction's category. The teacher will ask the student the following types of questions:

- Was there teasing or aggressive words or actions said?
- Was the bullying unprovoked?
- Did the bullying intend to hurt, harm or frighten?

If the answer is 'Yes' to all of the above then it is bullying and will be followed up. If it's not a bullying incident, it could be:

- Conflict: this may require conflict resolution
- Discipline: this may require HoY/SLT sanction
- Learning: this may require learning support

To prevent bullying, our students need to:

- Work to create a happy school environment for all
- Respect themselves and others
- Learn to tolerate and accept individual differences
- Stand up against bullying behaviour

- Ensure they use acceptable language when communicating with others
- Support the school policy on bullying

If a student feels they are being bullied, then they should:

- Tell the bully to stop
- Seek help and talk about it to someone they trust
- Report it to a teacher
- Try not to show you are upset - this is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear
- Stay with a group of friends/people - there is safety in numbers
- Not fight back as it may make matters worse – instead they should inform a teacher

If a student is the victim of cyber-bullying, they should:

- Tell a trusted adult about the bullying
- Not open or read messages from cyber bullies
- Tell a teacher/HoY or SLT at school if it is school related
- Not erase the messages - they may be used to act against the bullies
- Protect themselves - never agree to meet face to face with anyone they meet online
- Block bullies on 'chat or instant' messaging websites
- Always make sure their privacy settings are tight

If a student is aware of another student being bullied, they should:

- Care enough to do something about it, whether it affects them personally or not
- Step in early and try to defuse the situation before it gets out of hand
- Report it to a teacher and/or parent - take a friend with them if they want
- Not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully
- Not be tempted to forward cyber messages on
- Not join a cyber-group just to find out 'what is going on'

If parents are aware of bullying taking place, they should do the following:

- Work with the school to support their child – do not deal with the issue themselves but, instead, ask for the support of the school
- Call or email the school via their child's Form Tutor, not the other child's parents
- Report the incidents even if their child does not want this
- Tell their child the following:
  - That bullying is wrong - all students have the right to attend school without fear
  - The problem is unlikely to stop without adult intervention
  - For school related cyber-bullying, make a screen print of the bullying comments/photos and take to the relevant Assistant Principal
  - Check their child's device and computer privacy settings
  - Report the bullying person's cyber name to the website provider
  - If extremely explicit, take the screenshots to the police or local safeguarding authority set in place by the UAE
  - Help their child learn to stand up against bullying behaviour
  - Support the school's stance on bullying and their various policies

If a parent finds out that their child is cyberbullying, we expect them to:

- Ensure their child knows that there will always be a footprint in cyberspace of their child's behaviour and it can be traced
- Ensure their child knows that cyber-bullying has no geographical boundaries and their child can be involved in it 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Take away IT hardware/Mobile phone from their child's bedroom, particularly at night
- Work with the school and support the school policy on anti-bullying

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#### 4. Links to Other Policies

At WSD, we are committed to developing an anti-bullying culture where the bullying of adults, children or young people is not tolerated in any form. This policy links with a number of other Academy policies, practices and action plans including:

- Behaviour Policies for Primary and Secondary
- Complaints Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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