



مدرسة الرسالة العلمية الدولية
Al Resalah International School of Science

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

2024-25

Principal: Ms. Huda Al Samkari

Introduction

At RISS we strive to provide students with optimal conditions for learning by maintaining a school environment where everyone is treated with respect and no one is physically or emotionally harmed.

In order to ensure respect and prevent harm, it is a violation of this policy for a student to be harassed, intimidated, or bullied by others in the school community, at school sponsored events, or when such actions create a substantial disruption to the educational process.

The school community includes all students, school employees, school board members, contractors, unpaid volunteers, families.

Students will not be harassed because of their race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, mental or physical disability, or other distinguishing characteristics.

Any school staff who observes, overhears, or otherwise witnesses harassment, intimidation, or bullying or to whom such actions have been reported must take prompt and appropriate action to stop the harassment, intimidation, or bullying, and to prevent its recurrence.

Definitions

Bullying:

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behavior that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online and it can be obvious or hidden. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Harassment:

Harassment is behavior that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin, religion; physical characteristics; gender, marital, parenting or economic status, age; ability or disability and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment.

Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behavior, or it may be a single act.

Restorative Practices:

Restorative: to give back; to repair the harm and rebuild; to reintegrate the person(s) who did the harm; restore a sense of wellbeing and connection.

Restorative Practices in school encourage the reparation of relationships, and promote resilience and reconciliation, allowing students to learn from conflict situations, repair relationships and take personal responsibility for their actions.

The use of Restorative Practice emphasizes responsibility, accountability and the opportunity to restore relationships, learn from experiences and develop empathy and compassion amongst students.

Note: In cases where the situation is complicated, extremely sensitive or involves sexual harassment or repeated ongoing severe cases of bullying, Restorative Practice may not be suitable

Q. Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everyone 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.

Types of Bullying

Physical: Involves any harmful actions against a person's body including hitting, kicking, pushing, choking. It also includes interference with another person's property such as stealing or damaging. Physical harassment relates also to sexual harassment in the form of unwanted touching, making suggestive comments or gestures.

Verbal: Involves speaking to or about a person in a way that shows disrespect e.g. using offensive or abusive names, teasing, spreading rumors, making hurtful comments, and using putdowns. This includes use of homophobic, racist and sexist language.

Cyber bullying: Involves the misuse of technology such as social networking sites, email etc. to communicate aggressive, and sexual, degrading or defamatory information about someone or to start rumors.

Physiological: Includes behaviors that upset, exclude, or embarrass another person e.g. exclusion, rude gesture, unpleasant looks and silent treatment.

Sign which may indicate a student is being bullied:

- The student reports that they are being bullied
- Change in attendance
- Change in achievement levels
- Unexplained injuries
- Change in sleeping or eating patterns
- Withdrawal from activities / groups
- Mood changes
- Bullying is observed by other

PROCEDURE

Tackling bullying and harassment is everyone's responsibility. Proactive measures established to prevent and reduce bullying include:

- The formulation and communication of School-wide positive behavior expectations
- School-wide supervision and effective, consistent behavior management by all staff
- Lectures and activities and other initiatives which address Bullying and effects of it
- Arrangements for students to report bullying and discuss concerns

RISS will:

- Take all allegations of bullying seriously
- Refuse to accept that bullying is inevitable

Programs conducted at School:

- Increase awareness of this social issue and develop our awareness of the impact on bullying on others Provide support for all involved.
- Aim to restore damaged relationships Implement school disciplinary consequences as considered appropriate

We strongly encourage all students to report any incidents of bullying or harassment they experience personally to a member of the Staff and/or parents or guardians.

Students may wish to report to or discuss their concerns with any of the following people at the School:

- (Vice)Principal
- PE Teacher/Teacher
- Supervisor
- School Social Worker/ Counsellor
- Trusted friend or another student

Students are expected to:

- Respect the rights of all and recognize and accept their differences
- Report any incident, or suspected incident
- Refuse to take part in any form of bullying
- Support the targeted student if possible
- Take some form of preventative action if appropriate

Staff are expected to:

- Promote an ethos of respect for self and others
- Model appropriate behavior consistently
- Be observant for signs of suspected bullying or distress
- Provide information to students about the types and nature of bullying and incorporate these

- principles into their learning program
- Explicitly teach appropriate and positive behavioral rights and responsibilities
- Inform and challenge students when their behavior is offensive
- Be receptive and supportive to targets of bullying
- Be vigilant in supervision to reduce opportunities for bullying
- Respond appropriately to suspected incidents and always report to the relevant staff members
- Recognize that bullying is often a complex issue and initiate further discussion with key staff about ongoing strategies as required
- Contribute to a process of ongoing monitoring, evaluation and review of policies and procedures

Parents/guardians are encouraged to:

- Promote an ethos of respect for self and others
- Encourage their son / daughter to have confidence to speak up/report concerns
- Be aware of the Schools protocol and support processes of reconciliation and restorative practices (where appropriate) Watch for signs of distress or suspected instances of bullying
- Treat student's fears seriously
- Support students emotionally by letting them know the situation is unacceptable (it is not a normal part of school life) and will change
- Encourage students not to retaliate
- Inform the School if bullying is suspected, or encourage the student to tell a trusted staff member.

Consequences

Students found to be bullying face a range of consequences. Consequences include:

- Formal interview with School Social Worker/Counselor
- Recording of incident on Student Behavior Record (SSW)
- Parent notification and involvement
- Mediation and processes of reconciliation and restorative practice
- Restitution for damage to property
- Detention
- Counselling and/or formal referrals
- Disciplinary Action Committee (for serious offences or persistent inappropriate behavior)
- In cases of persistent and severe incidents of bullying student will be suspended from school

Policy application

Action to be taken when bullying is suspected: 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. The questions identified below will be used initially to determine if the incident is primarily bullying or if it falls into another sanctions 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. See 'Our Response to Bullying' in the flowchart.

If it's not a bullying incident it could be:

- Conflict: this may require conflict resolution.
- Discipline: this may require HoY/ TL/ SMT Sanctions.
- Learning: this may require learning support.

Students

To prevent bullying, 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 behavior.
- Support the school policy on bullying.

If you are bullied YOU need to:

- Tell the bully to stop.
- Seek help and talk about it to someone you 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.
- Do not fight back as it may make matters worse; however, if you decide to fight back, talk to a teacher or parent first.

In cyber bullying YOU need to:

- Tell a trusted adult about the bullying.
- Do not open or read messages from cyber bullies.
- Tell a teacher/HoY or administrator at your school if school related.

- Do not erase the messages - they may be used to take action.
- Protect yourself - never agree to meet face to face with anyone you meet online.
- Block bullies on 'chat or instant' messaging websites.
- Always make sure your privacy settings are tight.

If you know someone who is being bullied YOU need to:

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

Parents

If your child is bullied you need to:

- Work with the school to support your child.
- Call the school, not the other child's parents.
- Report the incidents even if your child does not want this.
- Tell your 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 School Leader in charge of pastoral care;

- check your 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 when set in place by the UAE;
- help your child learn to stand up against bullying behavior
- support the School's stance on bullying and their various policies.

If you find out your child has bullied another student, you need to be firm and:

- Tell them it is wrong and to stop.
- Know that the profile of bullies includes: - both boys and girls; - often popular outgoing and successful students.
- Students who may have also been victims of bullying.

If your child is cyber-bullying, you need to tell them to:

- Realise that there will always be a footprint in cyberspace of your child's behaviour and it can be traced.
- Realise that cyber-bullying has no geographical boundaries and your child can be involved in it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Take away IT hardware from your child's bedroom, particularly at night.
- Work with the school and support the school policy on anti-bullying.

If your child sees another child being bullied you need to tell them:

- It is wrong and not to support the bully
- To support the student who is bullied.
- To report it to a teacher.
- Help them by making an anonymous report by leaving an envelope in the school office for an appropriate trusted teacher.

What indicators do we use to measure our success?

- Record the number of students who have come forward to report bullying.
- Record the number of incidents and note the change of frequency over time. 3. Review sample cases for reflection and future planning.
- Record the number of cases where bullying has stopped.
- Through a PSHE student survey and a staff survey, note any comments or strategies students/teachers are using on 'Feeling Safe and Secure' at school