

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction

At GEMS Founders School – Dubai South (GFD) bullying is an action taken by one or more children, often with the deliberate intention of hurting, upsetting and intimidating another child. Bullying is most often unprovoked and a repeated behaviour that could take place within and/or outside the school premises and online. It can be direct (in the form of physical, verbal or emotional abuse), or indirect (such as being ignored or not spoken to).

Examples:

- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Religious discrimination and/or racism: racial taunts, excluding other students because of their religious/racial background, graffiti and gestures
- Gender: unwanted physical or verbal contact based on gender
- Harassment: threatening or disturbing behaviour inflicted on another.
- Cyber: all areas of the internet, such as social media (applications and platforms), Microsoft TEAMS, e-mails and internet chatrooms, mobile use and any misuse of associate technology i.e. camera and video facilities.

2. Purpose of policy

GFD is a diverse school which accepts children of all religions, cultural backgrounds and nationalities. We are committed to ensuring the wellbeing of all our children and providing a caring, friendly and safe environment so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We also encourage our students to be constantly mindful and sensitive to other peoples' feelings and opinions. Therefore, the purpose of this anti-bullying policy is to nurture a school ethos where bullying is considered unacceptable and to promote a whole school approach to prevent bullying. Students will understand the importance and have the confidence to approach staff to *speack out* about bullying and all staff should take this seriously.

3. Aims and objectives

At GFD, we have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. We aim to produce a safe and secure environment where all students can learn without anxiety, through promoting a mindful and wellbeing first approach. This policy aims to produce a clear and consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.

- To have a clear outline of procedures in place within the school environment to discourage bullying and to make clear each person's responsibilities to help act upon any bullying that is reported
- To make the expectations of the GFD anti-bullying policy clear to all stakeholders

Signs and symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or change in behaviour that he or she may be being bullied. Some possible signs include:



- being frightened of walking to or from school
- not wanting to go on the school bus
- asks to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to a specific lesson/subject school
- begins to truant
- becomes anxious or lacks confidence
- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money
- has snack or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- 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 and jumpy when a cyber message is received
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

This is not an exhaustive list and children may display other behaviours that appear out of character. Parents should feel free to contact staff should they have any concerns. Staff must remain vigilant about bullying behaviours and approach this in the same way as any other category of child abuse; that is, do not wait to be told before you raise concerns or deal directly with the matter. Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; because they may be too young or have a level of Special Educational Needs which means that they may be unable to realise what others may be doing to them. Staff must also be aware of those children who may be vulnerable pupils.

4. Consequences

All known/reported incidences of bullying will be investigated by the class teacher, form tutor, school counsellor or by a senior member of staff. Parents of the perpetrator may also be questioned about the incident or about any concerns that they may be having. The child displaying unacceptable behaviour, may be asked to genuinely apologise (as appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding). Other consequences may take place e.g. a parent being informed about their child's behaviour and a request that the parents support the school with any sanctions that it feels appropriate.

In serious cases, (this is defined as children displaying an on-going lack of response to sanctions, that is, no change in behaviour of the perpetrator and an unwillingness to alter their behaviour choices), actions such as support from behaviour outreach, counselling, reduced timetables, or even fixed or permanent exclusion will be considered according to KHDA guidelines. During and after the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be recorded in the and monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.



5. Prevention

At GFD, we use a variety of methods to support children in preventing and understanding the consequences of bullying. These include the school vision and mission, assemblies, PSHE lessons and themed days/weeks. Throughout the year students will be consulted through questionnaires about their whole school experience, including a section on how safe they feel in school. The use of Upstrive will also be used as a tool for students to log their emotions. The ethos and working philosophy of GFD means that all staff actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Good and kind/polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded. Staff will regularly discuss bullying. This will inform children that we are serious about dealing with bullying and lead to open conversations and increased confidence in children to wanting to discuss bullying and report any incidents and concerns about other children's behaviour.

Staff responsibilities

- Staff must reinforce expectations of behaviour as a regular theme in line with our Vision, Mission and our learning expectations
- Staff must follow all policies and support every child in our school
- Staff must be careful not to highlight differences of children or an individual child, even if this is done in jest. This gives other children advocacy to use this difference to begin calling names or teasing
- Staff must be vigilant regarding groups of friends together. Friendship groups may bring about the imbalance of power and must be led towards welcoming others to join them and not excluding others from their group
- Staff must reinforce a general message that children do not have to be friends with everyone else, but they must be friendly and respectful of everyone else's feelings and be kind to each other.

Student responsibilities

Students can, and will, be involved in the prevention of bullying as and when appropriate, through:

- Contributing to a set of school or class rules
- Writing a personal pledge or promise against bullying
- Writing stories or poems or drawing posters about bullying
- Reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- Making up role-plays about what to do through scenarios of bullying
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters that children who use unacceptable behaviour towards others are dealt with quickly

If a student feels that they are being bullied, then there are several procedures that they are encouraged to follow: (not hierarchical)

- Tell a friend
- Tell a teacher or adult whom you feel you can trust
- Tell a parent or adult at home whom you feel you can trust
- Discuss with the school counsellor



6. Recording of bullying Incidents

When an incident of bullying is shown to have taken place, staff must be prepared to record and report it each and every time. If a member of staff other than the class teacher witnesses or is informed of an act of bullying, they should refer it to the class teacher, form tutor, school councillor or by a senior member of staff who then records and investigates it. In the case of racist bullying, this must be reported to the Principal or Head of School. General incidences of bullying should be recorded. This would include incidents in which staff have been involved and spoken with children, and/or where parents have raised concerns regarding bullying. Confirmed cases of bullying must be recorded following the Record of Concern (ROC) procedure, as with any case of Child Protection.

The Principal should advise which level of ROC should be used. All incidents of bullying will be discussed with all relevant staff and parents of the children involved, in order that everyone can be vigilant and that further incidents by the same child(ren) may be prevented from happening in the future. Incidents of bullying will be discussed with the Local Advisory Board and/or GEMS Education.

7. Parental involvement: Advice for parents

As the parent of a child whom you suspect is being bullied, you could do the following:

- Report bullying incidents to the Class Teacher, Head of Inclusion, Head of Primary or Principal
- In cases of serious bullying, staff must record the incidents and the Principal notified
- In serious cases, parents should be informed and will be invited to a meeting to discuss the concern
- If necessary and appropriate, police may be consulted

Do Not:

- Attempt to sort the problem out yourself by speaking to the child whom you think may be behaving inappropriately towards your child or by speaking to their parents.
- Encourage your child to be 'a bully' back.

8. Equal Opportunities

GFD recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve, a diverse school community which includes people from differing backgrounds, with different skills and abilities. The school will take positive steps, through its governing body, managers and other employees, to create a school culture in which people can feel confident of being treated with fairness, dignity and tolerance, irrespective of their individual differences. This commitment extends to the whole school community and others connected with it. The school is committed to the elimination of unlawful discrimination and to the promotion of good relations between all.

9. Roles and responsibilities

The role of the student:

- To talk to any adult, they trust if they are being bullied or have witnessed bullying of any nature
- To stand up assertively and safely to a bully
- To communicate with the class teacher through an anonymous in the school any issues they are concerned about



The role of parents:

- To contact their child’s Class/Form Teacher if they concerned that their child may be getting bullied, or suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying
- To support the Anti-Bullying Policy and actively encourage their child to be a positive member of GFD community.

The role of teachers and support staff:

- To take all forms of bullying seriously and seek to prevent it at all times
- To participate in Anti-Bullying events
- To keep records of any incidents that happen in their class
- To deal with any issue of bullying immediately, either through whole class discussions or individually
- Contact Head of Year, Head of Inclusion or Senior Leadership Team if the issue continues
- Use a range of methods to prevent bullying and to create an environment of trust and respect for all
- Be aware of, and familiar with, the Anti-Bullying policy.

10. Cyber-bullying

There is a zero tolerance of cyber bullying and all cases or concerns must be reported to school. Online safety videos are shared with students and parents are informed on how to support their child through GEMS Connect and the school social media accounts. Students are also informed about their expected conduct on any communication platforms and if any behaviour is seen as being inappropriate or displaying signs of bullying the teacher should inform the parents and report this on Safeguarding which is monitored by school leaders.

Monitoring and review

Signed *[Signature]* Date 17/07/2024
Head of Primary

Signed Date: 17/07/2024
Teaching and Learning Coach

Signed *[Signature]* Date: 17/07/2024
Principal/CEO

Next policy review dates:

February 2025

June 2025