

The school policy against bullying will contain information on the following sections:

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- Purpose of an anti-bullying policy
- Defining bullying
- Kinds of bullying
- Reporting bullying
- Consequences for bullying
- Strategies for students
- Proactive steps - prevent bullying
- Websites relevant to issues of bullying
- Parent information

### 01 Purpose of an Anti-bullying policy

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MAIS is committed to fostering a compassionate, receptive and non-threatening atmosphere that promotes learning and personal growth. We aim to create an environment where all students and staff appreciate the right to work in a safe environment. Bullying of any sort, because of gender, race, disability, sexuality, religion, wealth, family background etc., is deemed completely unacceptable by the school. Students and staff are obliged to behave in a pleasant, sociable and non-threatening manner with each other.

If bullying does occur, we ensure that all staff respond consistently and appropriately, that we empower students being bullied to seek help and that we help those involved in bullying to change their behaviour..

### 02 Defining Bullying

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Bullying can be defined as actions that hurt or threaten another person either physically or mentally. It usually involves an abuse of power and a desire to intimidate and dominate. It is a **repeated, persistent and systematic harassment of others**.

### 03 Kinds of Bullying

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We have categorized bullying into 4 forms, and listed out behaviour that will be described/considered as bullying behaviour. However, please note that this list is not exhaustive.

**PHYSICAL:** Hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, slapping, hair pulling, taking or damaging belongings.

**VERBAL:** name-calling, insulting, repeated teasing, racist remarks, comments regarding sexual orientation, offensive language, notes or graffiti, email, text messages or phone calls.

**RELATIONAL:** spreading nasty rumours, excluding students from groups, threatening to withdraw friendship, ganging up or coercion.

**CYBER:** taking and posting of photographs without consent, impersonation through creating an account in another's name or hacking, and verbal and indirect forms of bullying through the use of social media and phones.

A student may engage in/ demonstrate sexually inappropriate behaviour towards another student. This will be understood as abuse and responded to as per the Child Protection Policy.

## 04 Reporting Bullying

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Most students who experience bullying do not usually reveal the extent and severity of the bullying. This stems from concerns that telling somebody could make the bullying worse, a fear that no one will believe or support them, a sense of being too embarrassed/ ashamed to admit what is happening or being seen as "snitching".

While we acknowledge that talking about bullying could be difficult for a student, we encourage students to report the same. All members of staff are made aware of procedures to be followed when an act of bullying is observed or reported.

While bullying is considered to be of a repetitive nature, single acts of reported aggression will also be responded to with due care and diligence.

### POINTS OF CONTACT FOR STUDENTS TO REPORT BULLYING

Students who experience or observe bullying could approach:

- the class teacher / teacher on duty
- any teacher they are comfortable with
- one of the counsellors
- the Head of Section
- the Principal
- inform their parents

## 05 Consequences of Bullying

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**The following are a possible range of consequences that can be used. Consequences will be determined by the teacher, Head of Section and/or Principal.**

- Verbal warnings
- Withdrawal of privileges – for instance, taken off the bus, taken off the schoolteam, not permitted to attend school trips, removed from office bearing positions, not entitled to a letter of recommendation from the school
- Staying back lunch/snack
- Written solutions to the problem
- Apology to the victim (written or verbal)
- Written warning sent to student, requiring parent signature
- Parent meeting with principal
- Permanent record in student file
- Suspension
- Expulsion

While the above constitute a range of disciplinary consequences, students are actively encouraged to reflect on their actions and change behaviours that have harmed others.

## 06 Strategies for students:

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School will respond to any report of bullying. While reporting bullying can feel difficult for some students, not talking about it can in fact worsen the situation far more than reporting it. Below are some suggestions that students can use in these situations.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO STOP BULLYING

- Stop and think before you say or do something hurtful.
- If you feel like being mean to someone, recognize that as a thought and know that you don't have to act on it.
- If you see another student being bullied, know that you can do something about it. By stepping in to help, you are conveying that the bullying behaviour is inappropriate.
- Helping could look like reaching out to an adult, asking the student to stop, walking away with the student being bullied. Sit with the student being bullied at lunch or on the bus, talk to them at school, or invite them to do something. Just hanging out with them will help them know they aren't alone.

### WHEN YOU ARE BEING BULLIED

- Look at the student who is bullying you and tell him or her to stop in a calm, clear voice. Using humour can sometimes diffuse a difficult situation.

- If speaking up seems too hard or not safe, walk away and stay away. Find an adult to stop the bullying on the spot.
- Talk to an adult you trust. They can help you make a plan to stop the bullying.
- Stay near adults and other students. Most bullying happens when adults aren't around.

#### **PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CYBERBULLYING**

- Always think about what you post. You never know what someone will forward. Do not share anything that could hurt or embarrass anyone.
- Keep your password a secret from other students. Friends could give your password away or use it in ways you don't want. Let your parents have your passwords.
- Before you post online, stop to think about who will see it. Privacy settings let you control who sees what. Keep your accounts private.
- Avoid online interactions with people you do not know and have not met in person.
- Keep your parents informed of what you're doing online. Let them friend or follow you. Listen to what they have to say about what is and isn't okay to do. They care about you and want you to be safe.
- Talk to an adult you trust about any messages you get or things you see online that make you uncomfortable.
- Be kind to the student being bullied. Show them that you care by trying to include them. Sit with them at lunch or on the bus, talk to them at school, or invite them to do something. Just hanging out with them will help them know they aren't alone.

## **07 Preventing Bullying - Proactive steps taken by the school**

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While the policy ensures that the school responds to acts of bullying in an appropriate manner, it is to our advantage if we work together to prevent bullying from happening.

**The following will be used to prevent and educate students about bullying:**

- Providing a common understanding of bullying issues for the whole school through PSE classes, general assemblies and classroom discussions
- Students to be made aware of being responsible and cautious of the information that they share online
- Educating students on the long term impacts of bullying on physical and mental health
- Ensuring that all students, faculty and parents have a common understanding of the anti- bullying policy
- Raising student awareness that they have the right to seek help to resolve bullying incidents
- Consistent implementation of the policy
- Emphasizing the importance of reporting incidents of bullying, both observed and experienced. The obligation to tell is emphasized and the code of silence is discouraged.
- Using curriculum activities and cooperative learning methods that foster positive relations among students and between students and teachers.
- Members of staff model respectful behaviour, convey a sense of caring responsiveness and avoid using sarcastic/threatening comments.
- Helping students in understanding diversity
- Building peer support systems, using techniques such as conflict resolution, mediation and class buddies. Encouraging student concerns to be heard through the appointing of student representatives on the Child Protection Committee.
- Teachers are vigilant during snack/lunch breaks and on buses.

**This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.**

## **08 Useful Websites**

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| • <a href="https://dfes.gov.uk/bullying">dfes.gov.uk/bullying</a>   | • <a href="http://www.bullying.co.uk/">www.bullying.co.uk/</a>  |
| • <a href="https://kidscape.org.uk/download/download.shtml#Policy">kidscape.org.uk/download/download.shtml#Policy</a> | • <a href="http://www.stopbullying.gov/kids/what-you-can-do/index.html">http://www.stopbullying.gov/kids/what-you-can-do/index.html</a> |

## **09 Parent Information**

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Acknowledging that talking about bullying could be difficult for a child, parents should be aware of possible signs that indicate bullying and encourage their child to talk about it.

## Signs that indicate bullying:

### A CHILD MAY BE BEING BULLIED IF HE OR SHE:

- Seems withdrawn or anxious/moody
- Demonstrates marked fear or unwillingness to attend school
- Erratic attendance
- Isolation or preference to remain with adults
- Difficulties with focus, sudden dip in grades, incomplete schoolwork
- Cries him/herself to sleep at night/ has chronic nightmares
- Is noticeably frightened or evasive when asked, "What's wrong?"
- Changes in appetite and eating patterns
- Has unexplained cuts, scrapes or bruises
- Complains repeatedly of aches and pains
- Repeatedly claims to feel ill before going to school
- Repeatedly loses lunch, money or possessions
- Comes home with clothes dirty/torn, or books other possessions damaged
- Begins bullying or showing unusual aggression or irritability with siblings/others
- Asks to be driven to school to avoid taking the bus
- Makes significant changes to his/her usual routine

This list is not exhaustive. These signs may also indicate other difficulties that the child may be experiencing, but bullying should be considered a possibility and looked into.

## Signs that indicate bullying:

Telling an adult about bullying is not easy for children. If your child comes to you seeking assistance with bullying, spend time listening to them and provide affirmation and support before taking actions.

Be aware of your own emotional state as you listen to your child. Listening calmly allows for your child to share freely, without having to worry about your reaction. Acknowledge that your emotional responses would need to be processed separate of your child sharing information with you.

Reach out to school if you are concerned or require clarity about what is being reported to you, and avoid making quick decisions or judgements around the incident.

If you decide to inform school, ensure that your child is aware of your plan. As the first point of contact please reach out to your child's class teacher. All members of staff are made aware of procedures to be followed when an act of bullying is reported.

Assure your child that working with school will help in addressing their concerns.

**Reports of bullying will be responded to, by school, with due care and diligence.**

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