

International School of Creative Arts

Anti-Bullying Policy

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1. Definition of Bullying

Staff are aware that bullying takes four principal forms: verbal, physical, emotional and manipulative, which causes distress to the victim of bullying.

- Verbal – name calling, threats, insults or offensive remarks spoken directly.
- Physical – hitting, kicking, deliberate pushing and jostling, taking of property.
- Indirect – spreading rumours, sending malicious messages, ostracising, and cyber bullying to intimidate individuals.
- Emotional / psychological.

Bullying often focuses on anything perceived as being different from the majority, and can often be based on prejudice and discrimination. This can undermine our work in promoting equal opportunities and teaching moral principles. Bullying may seize upon aspects of body shape or appearance, age, gender, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Bullying is often recognised as a prolonged ‘attack’ but it may also be a single unresolved event, which casts a shadow over a student’s life. Research has shown that whilst schools do not tolerate bullying, its extent is often greatly underestimated. This is of particular relevance to ISCA as a boarding school, where a boarder who may be bullied cannot escape their bullies for long periods of time as they are not going home every evening/weekend.

Responsibility for bullying rests not just with the perpetrator(s) but also with bystanders who look on and do nothing. While we do not expect bystanders to intervene directly, we do expect them to report any perceived incident of bullying of a person or people.

2. Aims

The School aims:

- To create an atmosphere where all students can reach their full potential within a safe and caring environment and therefore bullying and other forms of anti-social behaviour are not tolerated
- To ensure students are made aware of the code of conduct, which outlines how students are expected to behave towards all other members of the School community. This code of conduct outlines the fact that harassment is not tolerated by anyone
- To address issues relating to bullying during Community Briefings, group and on-to-one tutorials, as well as through the Student Handbook, noticeboards and any other means of viable communication with students.
- To ensure that the School’s Anti-Bullying Policy is published on the school website and that parents are made fully aware of it

3. Strategies for Dealing with Bullying

Relationships can break down and so procedures to deal with bullying need to be in place. The purpose of this procedure is to protect and support the victim, to rehabilitate the

perpetrator and to re-establish a secure and happy environment. This is for the safety of all individuals and for the wellbeing of the community as a whole.

Issues of bullying will be dealt with according to the perceived seriousness of the situation by teachers and/or boarding staff, in liaison with the Head of School. The Head of School will inform any other member of staff as necessary and keep confidential records of all bullying incidents.

The default stance of all staff should be to listen to, believe and help all concerned. All students should know that we regard bullying as a serious offence and that all claims of bullying will be thoroughly investigated.

The School will adopt anti-bullying strategies which may include some of the following:

- All staff and students are made aware of the different types of bullying likely to be encountered in school and of the various strategies the School may use to counter these.
- Encourage members of the school community to speak out the first time they experience it to enable the matter to be quickly and effectively tackled.
- Discuss and reflect upon the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Behaviour Policy and the Code of Conduct, so that people know what is deemed to be wrong and how the School will act.
- Listen carefully to staff and students and provide opportunities for them to express views and opinions.
- Use surveys to base discussions with members of the school community on the extent and nature of problems.
- Record incidents and actions taken carefully, noting patterns.
- Explore issues related to bullying, peer pressure, gender relations, diversity and difference through the curriculum and through staff training - discussing what schools and society can do to end discrimination.
- Teach assertiveness and other skills.
- Make classroom activities sensitive to the needs of all.
- Involve multi-agency work, including the Police, Social Services and others.
- Use peer mentoring, peer mediation to raise awareness and to help resolve conflicts.
- Write stories or poems or draw pictures about bullying.
- Create an environment and culture in which members of the School feel confident enough to report incidents.
- Ensure that the school site is well supervised, paying attention to areas where students may be vulnerable, including the use of CCTV.
- In PSHE students will learn, discuss and develop themes such as friendship, conflict, power, trust and to reflect on them
- All areas of the curriculum will be encouraged to use learning activities and resources that promote the dignity of the individual and the development of a 'tolerant' society.
- Through the school system of rewards, students will be given praise and recognition for co-operative behaviour.
- Students will be taught that poor behaviour, including bullying, will be met with counselling and where necessary sanctions.

The School will continue to discuss and to develop further ideas and strategies to bring about a safe and positive environment

To allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

4. Procedures

ISCA operates a policy of transparency when identifying and dealing with matters of bullying to ensure that students and staff are encouraged to report bullying within the school.

Reporting and Recording Arrangements

A student who feels they are being bullied must tell a teacher or any other member of staff with whom they feel comfortable. If they do not feel confident enough to speak up by themselves, students should be encouraged to enlist the moral support of a friend. Above all, students should be encouraged to tell someone straight away.

All students and all members of staff who witness or are aware of bullying taking place also have a duty to report it straight away.

Members of staff should not ignore or disregard a complaint. When a case is referred to them, or they have witnessed bullying directly, they should:

- ask for details and record the information in a Cause for Concern report sheet, available on the shared drive (J:\13. WELFARE & DISCIPLINE\Cause for Concern\Templates).
- give the completed form to the Head of School.

The Head of School will then follow these procedures:

1. As soon as possible arrange to interview all involved parties. It is essential that records are kept of all interviews using the Cause for Concern Report forms.
2. Speak to the victim to establish what exactly has occurred and whether there are any witnesses. These witnesses should then also be interviewed. (It should be made clear to witnesses that it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in these discussions as the person accused of bullying will need to be told exactly what they have done and the effect it has had).
3. Interview the person being accused of bullying once the details of the complaint have been established. This should be recorded on the Cause for Concern Report form.
4. Inform the parents of the victim and the student doing the bullying. Parents will be made fully aware of the School's anti-bullying policy. It will be stressed that if the bullying continues sanctions will be used.
5. Make all members of staff involved with the students, including boarding staff, aware of any incidents of bullying and any strategies that have been put in place, e.g. target report cards/action plans, not sitting by or working with certain students etc.
6. Arrange a follow-up meeting with the students a week later to check how things are going. A record of this should also be kept on the Cause for Concern Report form.

5. Involvement of Parents

Parents will be made fully aware of the School's Anti-Bullying Policy. In some cases, parents may be the first to alert a teacher to an incident of bullying and they may be in some distress when they contact the School.

Good practice includes:

- recognising that the parent may be angry or upset
- keeping an open mind – lack of staff awareness does not mean it is not happening
- remaining calm and understanding
- making clear that the School does care and that something will be done, explaining the school policy and seeing that procedures are followed.

6. Sanctions

Sanctions for the bully may include:

- targets for behaviour from the teacher, tutor or Head of School
- reporting to a designated person on a daily or weekly basis
- loss of privileges or internal seclusion.
- if the behaviour of the bully does not improve this could lead to suspension or ultimately exclusion (see Exclusion Policy).

As the behaviour of the bully improves then sanctions should be removed and the student should be praised for their good behaviour. It is important to remember that being found bullying may also have damaged their self-esteem, or low self-esteem may have been the root cause.

7. Bullying of people with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities

Students who have a disability or Special Educational Need are often at greater risk of being bullied both directly and indirectly and usually about their specific difficulties or disability.

ISCA also recognises that those with Special Educational Needs may not be able to articulate their experiences as well others. Therefore it is extremely important for all staff and those working directly with the students to recognise the signs of bullying and if necessary report it on their behalf