



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bullying (peer on peer abuse) affects not only bullies and victims, but everyone, including those children who observe and pupils more susceptible to peer pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable or necessary part of school life and it rarely resolves itself. Certain jokes, insults, intimidating/ threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence can be found in our society. No one person or group, whether staff or student, should have to accept such behaviour. At VISP, we strive to create a bullying-free environment that will allow a child to be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at the School.

A Definition of Bullying:

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally, provoking someone and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

This policy is aimed at ensuring all staff and parents know how our school deals with instances of bullying behaviour amongst our children and what steps they can take to prevent it or deal with it effectively if it occurs.

All students at Vijay International School have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. We have a 'zero tolerance' approach to bullying.

All institutions, both large and small, contain some students with the potential for peer-on-peer abuse. If a school is well-disciplined and organised, it can minimise the occurrence of bullying. Bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is wrong and will not be tolerated.

What is bullying?

Bullying is any behaviour which is deliberately intended to hurt, threaten or frighten another person or group of people. Bullying is when these behaviours are repeated and persistent.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- Physical: aggressive: hitting, kicking, taking or damaging belongings, using threats to gain possession of property.
- Verbal: name calling, nasty teasing, laughing at someone or spreading rumours. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/social disability or personality etc. The use of 'nicknames' may also constitute bullying.
- Language: profanities in any language are not acceptable; this is especially true when such language is used in front of someone who does not understand that language.
- Indirect: deliberately leaving someone out or ignoring someone, excluding them from discussions/activities, a 'look' which can be unkind, intimidating, making someone feel bad for academic/extra-curricular contributions.
- Cyber-bullying: sending a malicious or hurtful message by social media, e-mail, or other forms of cyber platform or texting on a mobile phone.



As a student what can you do if you are being bullied?

Don't suffer in silence. (Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon).

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is **WRONG!**
- Talk to a responsible adult or student leader (class teacher/tutor, safeguarding lead, student leader)
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard, but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can - look the bully in the eye and tell him/her to stop.
- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible and go straight to a member of staff and explain what has happened.
- If this happens after school inform a member of staff the next day. Disengage with the bully or social media by not responding. If possible, keep the hurtful messages that you have been sent, they might be used as evidence and help to stop the bully.
- If you know someone is being bullied: **TAKE ACTION!**
- Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel unhappy and on his/her own.
- Stand up to the bully or speak up against them to convince others in the class.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult **IMMEDIATELY**. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.
- Do not feel that you must be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

As a parent:

- Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, how lunch time was spent etc.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school **IMMEDIATELY** with as much information as possible. Your complaint will be taken seriously, and appropriate action will follow.
- It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.
- Tell your own son/daughter there is nothing wrong with him/her. It is not his or her fault that they are being bullied.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the school policy concerning bullying, and that they should not be afraid to ask for help.

As a school we:

- Expect pupils to treat everyone with **RESPECT**.
- Consider bullying a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it.
- Organise the school environment to minimise opportunities for bullying.
- Use any opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying, and how to behave towards each other.
- Deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary.
- Staff should not use teaching materials or equipment which gives a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, sex, etc.
- Encourage pupils to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes a review of what friendship really is.
- Will address bullying as part of the PSHE curriculum and in assemblies as appropriate.
- Provide annual training for all staff on safeguarding which includes awareness of signs of abuse in any context.
- Expect Staff to report suspected bullying to the Safeguarding Lead and other staff as appropriate (e.g.Tutor, Head of Section).



Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied.

Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts to stammer
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to make less effort with schoolwork than previously
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- 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
- lack of eye contact
- becoming short tempered
- change in attitude to people at home.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Action to be taken when bullying is suspected:

- Talk to the suspected victim, the suspected bully and any witnesses. If any degree of bullying is identified, individuals should be isolated and written statements should be taken from all parties.
- Members of staff, which may include Teachers, Tutors, Head of Section and Principal, discuss whether further action is necessary.
- Further action – helping the victim:
 - Offer them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their Tutor, Head of Section or another teacher, of anyone on the staff they choose.
 - Offer strategies and tools to the victim.
 - Inform the victims' parents/guardians about the actions put in place.
 - Offer continuing support when they feel they need it.



Take one or more of the disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying:

- further action – disciplining and helping the bully to reform
- confront the bully with his/her actions and the consequences they have on other students and the school.
- talk about what happened, discover why they became involved.
- Use restorative justice practices to seek to address the needs of those who have been harmed, while encouraging those who have caused harm to take responsibility.
- inform the bullies' parents/guardians, making clear the actions and disciplinary steps that the school is taking.
- continue to work with the bullies to get rid of prejudiced attitudes as far as possible.
- involve Learning Support or refer to National Children's Council if appropriate.

DISCIPLINARY STEPS

Discipline will usually be carried out in line with the behaviour policy and every attempt will be made to understand the situation fully and to help the students understand the situation fully and prevent any further occurrences. This may involve mediation and a framework to restore positive relationships whenever possible. However, it is important to deal with each incident on a case-by-case basis and depending on the severity of the incident, escalate the process if necessary. Further sanctions to help the perpetrator understand the severity of their actions may also include:

- Official warning to stop offending.
- Inform the bullies' parents/guardians.
- Exclusion from socialising with their peers at social times (detention).
- Exclusion from after-school clubs and activities and possibly from school excursions.
- Internal suspension for a fixed period
- External suspension for a fixed period
- Permanent exclusion (expulsion).

Any bullying incidents involving protected characteristics or sexual harassment will also be dealt with under the Safeguarding Policy and may be referred to external agencies if necessary.