



Straits International School Penang Anti Bullying Policy

Policy	Anti-Bullying Policy		
Approval Date:	November 2022	Next review:	November 2023
Review Cycle:	1 Year		
Scope:	Whole School		
Ownership	School Principal & Designated Safeguarding Lead	Approved by:	Campus SLT,

1. **Introduction**

- 1.1. This policy informs practice in the Preparatory & Senior Schools, including the Sixth Form (post 16) and Boarding. The policy from the Preparatory School has small differences of practice, but not of principle.

- 1.2. This policy takes into account: National Minimum Standards for Boarding School' (2015 std.12); 'Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-bullying Work in Schools', 'Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006', 'Equality Act 2010', 'Behaviour and Discipline in Schools: a Guide for Headteachers and School Staff August 2011' and 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying August 2013. See also the "Cyber-bullying Policy."

2. **Statement of Intent**

- 2.1. At Straits International School, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment, so that every one of our pupils can develop his/her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and cooperation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

- 2.2. Straits International School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance.

Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting us in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and home have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they cooperate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

- 2.3. Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils

and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. There are no 'initiation ceremonies' intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation.

- 2.4. We aim to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Safeguarding Pupils and Young People

- 2.5. Under the Pupils Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child doing the bullying. The School has a very good relationship with many outside agencies, including CAMHS and ESBAS – East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service.

Bullying Outside School Premises

- 2.6. Headteachers have a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives Headteachers the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff (this legislation does not apply to independent schools). However, we will always investigate reported incidents of poor behaviour of our pupils outside of the school premises.

Bullying and Anti-Social Behaviour

- 2.7. Bullying or harassment of any kind - mental, verbal, cyber or physical is unacceptable. All students and boarders need to recognise that bullying, theft and vandalism can do more to erode a sense of community and respect for each other than almost anything else. Students should be in absolutely no doubt that they all have a corporate responsibility to promote this attitude.

3. Definition of Bullying

- 3.1. Bullying may be defined as the intentional and repeated hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual or sexist), verbal or cyber (please see relevant policy) and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation.

Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

- 3.2. Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, religious or cultural, which focus on disabilities (including special educational needs) or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Straits International School believes bullying can cause serious psychological damage and it will never be underestimated.

Cyber-bullying

- 3.3. The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school.

Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying, which can happen 24/7, with a potentially bigger audience and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. For more information on how to respond to cyber-bullying and how pupils can keep themselves safe, please refer to the "Cyber-bullying Policy". Examples include: social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, photographs, videos, emails, sexting.

4. Signs of Bullying

- 4.1. Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school.
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet.
- Failure to produce work or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others.
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing or are damaged.
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary).
- Diminished levels of self-confidence.
- Frequent visits to the School Office with symptoms such as stomach pains and headaches.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance or late arrival to class.
- Choosing the company of adults.
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact.
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares.
- Talking of suicide or running away.

- 4.2. Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers. It must be remembered that bullying can take place anywhere, in and out of school hours, in class or at break times. Particular places and times to watch for are:

- Locker areas.
- Changing rooms.
- When lining up for lessons.
- When changing.
- Mobile phone and social networking sites.

5. Bullying – Preventative Measures

- 5.1. We aim to instill a strong Anti-Bullying culture across all areas of school life. In doing so we take the

following preventative measures:

- A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is made available to all pupils, name clearly on display.
- Bullying and what to do if being bullied is discussed in Form Period at the beginning of every term.
- We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other.
- Other lessons, particularly Religious Studies, English and Drama can highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.
- An 'Anti Bullying Week' takes place every November when every student is involved in activities that seek to highlight issues around bullying
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents.
- Form Tutors play a vital role in supporting the DSL and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority. All are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Our DSL and other senior staff give support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting of incidents and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- External Counsellors are an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and counselling. He/she is available to give confidential advice and counselling support to pupils who can refer themselves to him/her when they have social, emotional or behavioural concerns. On occasion, a member of our pastoral team may refer to our range of providers.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- All pupils have access to a telephone helpline, enabling them to call for support in private and an independent listener.
- We operate Buddy and Peer Mentoring schemes, whereby trained older pupils are encouraged to offer help and support to younger pupils.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils.
- We encourage feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.
- Boarding pupils have access to an Independent Listener whose name is readily available at all times. All community members must be encouraged to speak up against bullying. The Independent Listener is Ms Terri Jackson and she can be contacted using details on the 'In Need of Help' poster that is on walls throughout the school.

6. **Whistle blowing**

- 6.1. Straits International School encourages pupils to report any bullying of which they become aware. It is a duty of staff to do so.

7. **Procedures for Dealing with Reported Bullying**

- 7.1. If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:
- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation will control

the situation if necessary, reassuring and supporting the pupils involved. Pupils should be removed to safety if necessary.

- He/she will inform the relevant Head of Pastoral Care (Prep)/ Head of House (Senior) as soon as possible.
- The victim will be interviewed on his/her own and asked to write an account of events. He/she may be helped to do this. Leading questions must be avoided and factual evidence should only be taken.
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events. The Head of Pastoral Care/ Head of House will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- The incident will be recorded and kept on the files of all pupils concerned and in the Bullying Book (Prep)/ iSAMS (Senior/Sixth Form)
- The Head (Prep) and Deputy Head (Senior) will be informed and become involved if the bullying is of a serious or persistent nature and requires a greater level of intervention.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the Pastoral Team (Prep)/ Head of House (Senior), separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him/her why revenge is inappropriate. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and may be invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and possibly counselling should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for pupils who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures. Strong sanctions such as suspension or expulsion for repeated bullying may be necessary.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious cases and after the Head/Deputy Head has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Children's Services. However, it is the policy of Straits International School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

8. **Disciplinary steps**

8.1. The disciplinary steps are:

1. Pupils are warned officially to stop offending. Initial instances of unkind behaviour will be dealt with as per the Behaviour Policy. The Behaviour Report System is available to monitor the bully's behaviour, sometimes requiring the parents' daily involvement.
2. If bullies do not stop agreed behaviours, the bully's parents/guardians will be informed and demands for the appropriate changes in behaviour will be made.
3. If they still do not stop target behaviours, bullies will be suspended for a fixed period; there will be a re-admission interview and Behaviour Plan drawn up, as appropriate.
4. If they then carry on they will be recommended for suspension for an indefinite exclusion; following this exclusion there will be a re-admission interview and Behaviour Plan drawn up, as

appropriate.

5. If they will not end such behaviour, they will be recommended for permanent exclusion to the Director.
6. Depending on circumstance, a child may enter this system of disciplinary steps at point one, or anywhere else. If they stop the agreed behaviours for ten consecutive school weeks, they will be deemed to have responded appropriately and the threat of serious sanctions will end. However, should the agreed behaviour start again, progress through the disciplinary steps will be rapid.

9. **Staff Training**

- 9.1. Straits International School aims to train all staff about bullying every three years concurrently with Child Protection training. Periodically, staff meetings are used to discuss bullying and to review the effectiveness of current preventative measures. The Senior Leadership Team review records of bullying termly. See also the "Behaviour Policy", "Cyber-bullying Policy" and "Exclusion Policy".
- 9.2. The School intends to identify and take action against any pupil bullying. Close communication between the Boarding House and School is crucial at all times.