



Anti-Bullying Policy

Whole School, April 2016

Principles and Values

Stonehill International School (SIS) is committed to providing a safe and positive learning environment for all its students. The school will adopt a proactive and preventive approach to bullying, making sure to counter any behaviour that creates barriers to learning. The ethos of our school fosters high expectations of outstanding behaviour and will consistently challenge any behaviour that falls short.

Objectives of this Policy

- All members of the school community will have an understanding of what constitutes bullying.
- All teaching staff should know what the school policy on bullying is, and to follow it when an incident of bullying is reported.
- All students and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is defined as:

- (a) the use of force or coercion to negatively affect others;
- (b) involving an imbalance of social, physical, and/or emotional power; and
- (c) involving wilful and repeated acts of harm (National Association of School Psychologists, U.S.A.).

Bullying behaviours are persistent and directed at individuals based on actual or perceived race, colour, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, physical appearance, or any other distinguishing characteristics.

There are different types of bullying. The following are the most commonly occurring types among children and adolescents:

- **Verbal** bullying includes, but is not limited to - name-calling; insults; making racist, sexist or homophobic jokes, remarks, or teasing; sexually suggestive or abusive language; threats of violence; and offensive remarks.
- **Physical** bullying includes, but is not limited to - hitting, kicking, pinching, punching, scratching, spitting, other forms of physical aggression, and damage to or taking someone else's belongings.
- **Relational/Social** bullying includes, but is not limited to - spreading untrue stories about someone, excluding from social groups (social isolation), and being made the subject of malicious rumours.
- **Electronic/Cyber** bullying includes, but is not limited to - any type of bullying that is carried out via an electronic medium such as text messaging, cell phone calls, pictures or video clips using mobile/iPad cameras, e-mail, chat rooms, social networking sites, and other websites.

Bullying can take place in the classroom, playgrounds, toilets, on the bus, cafeteria, during educational field trips, boarding house or online.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Children are not always capable of indicating that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of taking the bus
- Begs to be driven to school
- Deviates from their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school
- May want to leave boarding
- Is truant
- Becomes withdrawn or anxious
- Loses confidence
- Starts stammering
- 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 school work 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

Why is it important to respond to Bullying?

Bullying has the potential to damage the mental health of a victim. Bullying is associated with an increased risk of suicide among victims (Kim, Leventhal, Koh, & Boyce, 2009), as well as increased chance of depression and other problems (Fekkes, Pipers, & Verloove - Vanhorcik, 2004). Targets of cyberbullying have reported higher levels of depression than victims of face-to-face bullying (Wang, Nansel, & Iannotti, 2010). Bullying and bystander silence that takes place in schools is particularly likely to create an unwelcome and an increasingly intimidating environment (Orpinas, Horner, & Staniszewski, 2003).

Aggression and intimidation violate the right of students to receive equal educational opportunities, and the right to be treated with respect.

The role of parents in responding to, and preventing bullying

Parents who suspect their child is being bullied should report bullying incidents to the homeroom teacher, boarding parents or other trusted adult as soon as possible.

- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff. A meeting may be organized to discuss the situation in person.
- The school counsellor will provide one-on-one support for the victim as well as for the perpetrator.

The role of students in responding to, and preventing bullying

Students are involved in the prevention of bullying when appropriate, these may include class behaviour expectations, role plays for assemblies, essays for their class blogs etc. If students feel that they are being bullied, there are several measures that they are encouraged to follow:

- Tell a friend
- Tell a student council representative
- Tell a teacher, boarding parent or adult whom you feel you can trust
- Tell a parent or an adult at home whom you feel you can trust

The role of staff in responding to, and preventing bullying

All school staff understand the principles of the school policy, their legal responsibilities, actions to be taken to resolve and prevent problems and sources of further support. All staff members must remain vigilant about bullying behaviours and must not wait to raise any concerns.

All staff members should be vigilant regarding friendship groups. These groups may bring about an imbalance of power and must be led towards welcoming others to join them. Staff must reinforce a general message that students are not required to be friends with everyone, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings.

Staff must be aware of those children who may be vulnerable to bullying (students with disabilities, limited language, etc.).

Our Counseling Team are an important part of our pastoral support service. They are available to give confidential advice and counselling support to students who can refer themselves when they have social, emotional or behavioural concerns.

We have a strong and experienced pastoral team consisting of House Parents, Home Room teachers, Student Counsellor, Head of Boarding and Principal.

Prevention

The IB curriculum views respect as an important attitude for all students to cultivate. All staff at Stonehill actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people, as well as property. Kind and polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded.

At Stonehill we use a variety of methods to support children in preventing and understanding the consequences of bullying through assemblies, personal-social development (PSD) lessons, home room, subject lessons, social-skills groups and student-led initiatives.

The issue of bullying is discussed during PSD lessons. This facilitates an open conversation and an increased confidence in students to want to discuss bullying and report any incidents/concerns about other student's behaviour. Our PSD/PSPE programmes are structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to reinforce messages about community involvement and taking care of each other.

All our students are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know or suspect that bullying is taking place. All boarding students are encouraged to report concerns to House Parents or another member of the Pastoral Team. All of our students led by our student council are proactively engaged in promoting a positive and non-threatening environment.

Outcomes: (Consequences)

Primary School

When serious unacceptable behaviour has been identified, a range of strategies will be used. These include one or more of the following:

- Loss of break times and exclusion from class (time will be supervised by the Primary Principal)
- Written reflection
- Communication with parents
- Establishment of behaviour record book
- Meeting with Parents
- Exclusion from school

In extreme cases of serious misbehaviour, parents will be called and the child may be removed from school until the Primary Principal has a meeting with parents and child to discuss re-entry. The Head of School reserves the right, where there has been a serious breakdown of discipline, to require that a student be suspended from school for a fixed term. In such cases parents will be informed prior to suspension and will be asked to attend a meeting before their child is allowed to return to class.

Secondary School

Bullying/Cyber bullying is classed as serious unacceptable behaviour which bypasses the Secondary School Behaviour Policy's 3 - Strike Teacher Detention System, at the discretion of the Coordinators and Principal.

The member of staff to whom it was reported, or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved. He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible: eg Home Room Teacher, Counselling team, House Parent, Head of Boarding and the Principal.

All students who were involved, will immediately be interviewed individually (or, if appropriate, with a suitable person present for support) and asked to write an account of events. The incident should be recorded, signed and dated before it is given to the Principal for day School or the Head of Boarding for boarding students who is responsible for keeping all records of bullying and other serious disciplinary offences.

When it is established that bullying has occurred, the student is excluded from school and parent/s are informed of the consequences. As soon as possible, a meeting will be arranged between the Principal and the parent/s concerned to discuss reintegration back into the school and any further consequences (if any).

A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and/or counselling when appropriate, should be determined, and where possible agreed with all parties. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for students who are being bullied and for students who bully others, as well as dealing with disciplinary measures in accordance with the School's Behaviour Management Policy if appropriate.

Boarding School

Feeling safe and happy is vital for the success and well-being of students living away from home. For these reasons, unwanted aggressive behaviour or bullying in the residential setting is deemed to be very serious and in conflict with residential /community living which is based on positive relationships.

Reporting may come from the student, parent, Boarding House Tutors or House parents. In line with SIS Whole School Anti-Bullying policy, all boarding students involved, will immediately be interviewed individually (or, if appropriate, with a suitable person present for support) and asked to write an account of events. The incident will be dealt with by the Head of Boarding and, where applicable, may be referred onto the Secondary School Principal where it involves the Day School.

If bullying is established, a range of consequences may be applied including loss of privileges/ gating/ community service etc. In serious cases, student(s) may be excluded internally and parent/s informed. In extreme situations, the boarding student may be suspended from Boarding for a period of time. As soon as possible, a meeting will be arranged between the Head of Boarding and the parent/s concerned to discuss returning to boarding. Referral to the SIS Counseling team is automatic.