

Victorious International British School

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Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is a very serious matter and can cause lasting physical and emotional damage, which may cause lasting psychological damage. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws, which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. Bullying behaviour will not be accepted, tolerated or condoned.

It is important that all members of the School community recognise that bullying behaviour is not acceptable in any circumstances. All pupils and staff have the right to attend a school where they feel safe, free from harassment and where they know that any concerns they have will be listened to and acted upon.

This policy is also to be read in conjunction with the ICT Acceptable Use Policy, the Behaviour Policy, and the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy. All instances of bullying will be considered as to whether there is a safeguarding concern.

We want Victorious School to be a place where everyone feels secure. We take our duty of care of pupils seriously. Relationships are the foundation of our school and pupils are encouraged to treat others as they would wish to be treated. We seek to ensure that everyone is accepted regardless of race, religion, culture or disability.

The School aims to prevent bullying from becoming established. This is achieved by establishing a culture in which bullying is not tolerated and where it is seen as the responsibility of all members of the community to report any instances of bullying.

Not all unacceptable behaviour is bullying. People can say and do things that are hurtful both physically and emotionally through thoughtlessness. This can occur due to people disagreeing, falling out or simply being in a bad mood.

However, such behaviour is still unacceptable and in the first instance will be treated as a single, one off, incident and dealt with appropriately under the School's Behaviour Policy. Subsequent behaviour of a similar nature, directed towards an individual or group, will be considered a serious breach of the School's code of conduct.

Bullying incidents that take place outside the School environment but involve pupils of the School will be covered by this policy.

Our policy is positive rather than punitive. Our ethos is one that respects the individual and encourages both bullied and witnesses to speak out. We seek to support pupils who feel they have been bullied while helping bullies to change their behaviour.

Bullying: A Definition

"Deliberate, hurtful behaviour repeated over a period of time, and in circumstances where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves." (DfE)

What is Bullying?

Bullying intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer – it may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email). The following are defined as acts of bullying:

- Emotional (being unfriendly, threatening looks/gestures, banter, tormenting such as hiding belongings).
- Physical (pushing, hitting, shoving or any form of physical violence).
- Verbal (name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours).
- Sexual and sexist (unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments or those which are sexist (related to a person's gender or gender reassignment)).
- Exclusion (deliberately ignoring and refusing to allow someone to join in).
- Interference with possessions (hiding, stealing and destroying belongings).
- Bullying on the basis of perceived racial, religious or cultural differences.
- Bullying on the basis of a person's special educational needs, learning difficulty, disability, health or appearance.
- Homophobic bullying i.e. related to a person's sexuality.
- Intimidating behaviour – including the use of phones, use of intimidating or threatening language.
- Bullying because someone is adopted or a young carer.

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:

- becomes frightened of coming to school, or frightened to attend specific lessons or go to specific areas of the school
- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- 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
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to feel poorly at school
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- frequently has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for extra money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- begins to bully other children
- stops eating or attending meals
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- is afraid to use the internet or a mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received
- is reluctant to dismiss reasons for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Practice

We are working with staff, pupils and parents to create a school community where bullying is not tolerated. Everyone should:

- show respect for every child as an individual and give them a fair hearing,
- be aware of vulnerable children
- criticise the behaviour rather than the child

- avoid playing favourites
- be seen to be fair
- avoid labelling
- have high expectations of pupils
- avoid reference to other members of the family (e.g. "just like your brother/sister")
- never give pupils ammunition to use against each other

We discourage bullying by:

- making all pupils aware of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- supervising at all times such as playtime, break and lunch times and extra-curricular activities.
- giving regular reports
- holding parents' evenings/meetings and ensuring the Director and staff are readily available to talk to parents and pupils
- education e.g. PSHE

Preventative Measures Pupils

Everyone has the right to feel secure and happy whilst at Victorious School. No one should suffer any form of bullying at all and the whole school is responsible for maintaining a bully-free environment.

Pupils should:

- Respect and appreciate that everyone is different and all have a right to enjoy their learning and leisure free from intimidation
- Actively make the effort to include others in activities, especially new pupils
- Show respect to everyone and their belongings
- Be sensitive to others
- Notice when bullying or unfriendly behaviour is happening including electronically and report it to someone as it is too important to ignore.

Anybody who is aware of bullying should tell a member of staff, a friend, or a parent. This can be done by talking to someone, writing a note or emailing them. A notice will be displayed in each classroom advising pupils what to do if they are bullied or if they are aware of the bullying of or by others.

Pupils will have the policy drawn to their attention at the start of each academic year by their class teacher.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to be alert to and to respond to signs of bullying behaviour at all times. Staff will be expected to lead by example demonstrating the positive values they wish to see in others.

Whole staff and specific training will illustrate anti-bullying values through the curriculum and extra curriculum and PSHE. Other subjects such as Drama will aim to reinforce the anti-bullying message in lessons and enhance social and emotional skills amongst pupils. National Anti-Bullying Week which takes place annually is used as an opportunity to explore the issue. Assemblies are also used to promote positive values.

All staff will be made aware of the policy. Pupils will have the policy brought to their attention at the start of each academic year by their class teacher. Where an incident of bullying occurs or is suspected the procedures outlined in this policy are to be followed.

Action/Procedures Taken by Staff If Bullying Is Seen or Reported

All members of staff have a duty to respond straightaway if they suspect, or are made aware of a case of bullying.

Bullying instances may be identified in several ways:

- Disclosure to a member of staff by the individual being bullied
- Disclosure to another pupil by the individual being bullied
- Witnesses to specific bullying events
- Suspicion of bullying based upon the indicating factors.

An investigation of bullying will take time: there are no instant solutions. However, the following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.
- A clear account of the incident (including date, time and nature) will be recorded on the My Concern reporting system which alerts the DSL who will assess the incident and will pass it on to the relevant class teacher.
- The Class Teacher will interview all concerned i.e. victim(s), aggressor(s) and witness(es) and will record (on 'MyConcern') the descriptions of events/incidents. All parties will be reassured of the discretion of the school in dealing with such matters. The victim(s) in particular should be reassured that the matter will be dealt with and is treated seriously. If the victim reports the matter, they should be spoken to first. If not,

any witnesses should be interviewed, followed by the accused pupil and finally the victim. A written summary of the information gathered should be made, and agreed by the individuals involved. This will be written directly onto My Concern Form and kept on file. This is important as it will enable the victim and witnesses to feel reassured that action is being taken, and for the accused party to feel that they have had a fair hearing. Remember it can be hard to establish facts.

- Parents will be kept informed whenever necessary. A timescale for further contact if necessary will be given after the first telephone call. Whenever a serious case of bullying is uncovered the parents or guardian of both the victim and the bully would normally be informed either in writing or by personal contact. The contact may involve Teachers, the Deputy or the Director.
- A problem solving approach which avoids blame can be more effective in clarifying the situation and achieving change. Sanctions in line with School Policy will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned with a view to educating the offender where possible.
- Any staff involved will undertake to monitor the situation, and check that there is no further antagonism or bad feeling once the incident has been dealt with.
- A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that child is suffering or likely to suffer harm. External services may be drawn upon to support the child being bullied or child engaged in bullying. Whilst bullying is, in itself, not an offence certain related issues are and if school staff felt an offence had taken place they would consider seeking assistance from the police or local law authority.

All Pupils should know that they must report any incident, anxiety about someone or concern. We all have a duty to act and follow up all reports. We must take appropriate action and be seen to have done so, as this is part of our duty of care to the parents, pupils and ourselves. Pupils have a responsibility to help us to act by keeping us fully informed as to how the situation is developing.

Action Taken to Support Pupils Who Have Been Bullied

If it is felt that bullying has taken place, the victim should be told what action will be taken to prevent bullying from continuing.

Pupils who have been bullied will also be supported by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice

- reassuring the pupil
- offering on-going support i.e. the victim should be asked periodically whether the situation has been resolved and has remained resolved (usually a week, with further follow up after several weeks)
- help to restore self-esteem and confidence

Action Taken Against Pupils Who Have Exhibited Bullying Behaviour

The bully needs to understand the effects of their actions upon the victim, and should be given support in order to modify their behaviour.

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing what happened
- genuinely apologising to the victim
- discussion about how the pupil became involved
- establishing and acknowledging the wrong doing and need to change
- informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the pupil.

If, in spite of support, the bullying behaviour continues, there are a number of possible sanctions available to the School. These may include:

- a verbal warning, recorded in the bully's file
- a letter of apology to the victim, with a copy to be kept on file
- a withdrawal of privileges e.g. missing patio time, outdoor excursions to the beach, making lunch.
- referral to the Director for action in the case of persistent or severe bullying who may temporarily suspend or permanently exclude the bully.

If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the Director and Designated Senior Lead will consider implementing Child Protection procedures. External services may be drawn upon to support the child being bullied or the child engaged in bullying. Whilst bullying is, in itself, not a criminal offence certain related issues are and if the School staff felt an offence had taken place they would consider seeking assistance from the police or local law authority.

Monitoring

All instances of bullying are recorded on a My Concern Form and filed securely. The Director will be kept informed of incidences and any patterns that are noted.

Cyber Bullying

We have zero tolerance for cyber bullying.

Combating Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying may be defined as 'the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the Internet, to deliberately upset someone else.' It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. In many ways features of cyber bullying replicate aspects of bullying. However, it does differ in several significant ways from other types of bullying: the potential invasion of home and personal space, the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages, the potential size of the audience and the perceived anonymity which is often involved.

Cyberbullying may take different forms, including: threats and intimidation, harassment or 'cyber-stalking' (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts and instant messages), vilification/defamation, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation and unauthorised publication of private information or images. Cyberbullying takes place between children and between adults, but also across different age groups.

In many cases of cyberbullying, bystanders can easily become perpetrators, e.g. by passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate or by taking part in online chat or discussion groups. Such people may not recognise themselves as participating in bullying, but their involvement has the potential to compound the unhappiness for the person being targeted. 'Bystanders' or 'accessories' who actively support cyber bullying are liable to face sanctions themselves. Pupils who become involved in this respect need to be aware that their actions may have severe and distressing consequences, and that participating in such activity will not be tolerated.

There are particular features of cyberbullying that differ from other forms of bullying. The key differences include:

- Impact: the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than other forms of bullying as it is a highly public act.
- Targets and perpetrators: the people involved may have a different profile to traditional bullies and their targets
- Location: cyberbullying may take place on a "24/7 basis", and given the nature of electronic communication, its effects may be felt in any location

- Anonymity: the person being bullied will not always know who is attacking them.
- Evidence: unlike some other forms of bullying, the target of the bullying is likely to have evidence of its occurrence.

Different Technologies

Cyberbullying may take place through any of the following electronic means:

- Mobile Phones and other personal devices
- Instant Messenger and Voice over Internet Protocols
- Chat rooms and message boards
- Email
- Webcam
- Social networking sites
- Virtual Learning environments
- Gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds
- Blogs and Wikis

NB: There has been a significant increase in social networking sites for young people, which can provide new opportunities for cyber bullying.

Prevention

The School has a clear Anti-Bullying Policy Statement which seeks to reinforce values in all members of the School, which should, ideally, preclude all sorts of bullying, including cyberbullying. In addition to that general statement, this statement on cyberbullying has been produced in order to address features specific to cyber bullying. All aspects of bullying including cyberbullying are addressed in the PSHE programme. In addition, there are specific assemblies which seek to deal with aspects of cyberbullying and internet safety. It is important that all members of the School community are aware that cyberbullying is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of all members of the community to take action if they suspect cyberbullying is taking place; to remain silent could be seen as condoning the action of the bully. When cyberbullying is investigated reference will be made to the School's ICT/E-Safety Acceptable Use Policy.

Cyberbullying takes many forms and may cover physical appearance, disability, nationality, race, gender, religion and sexual orientation.

Reporting Procedure

1. If a pupil receives an abusive email, text or social network post (or any other form of unacceptable electronic communication) they should report the matter to a member of staff or their parents as soon as possible. A copy of the email or screen shot of the whole communication, plus dates and times should be printed/saved wherever possible.
2. Depending on the nature of the allegation, the case will usually be addressed initially either by the Class Teacher. For more serious allegations, the incident will certainly involve the Deputy or Director.
3. Pupils involved will be interviewed and given the opportunity to state their case, in order to establish the truth in what seldom turns out to be straight forward issues.
4. At the conclusion of the investigation, and in the light of what has been concluded, the outcome will be announced. This will be communicated to the staff and pupils involved and to parents. There are a range of sanctions which may be applied.

Sanctions

Sanctions applied will follow our Behaviour Policy.

The aim of the sanction is to:

- Help the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop.
- Hold the perpetrator to account getting them to recognise the harm caused to deter them from repeating the behaviour.
- Demonstrate to the School community that cyberbullying is unacceptable and that the School has effective methods of dealing with it, so deterring others from behaving similarly.

If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the Director and Designated Senior Lead will consider implementing Child Protection procedures which may involve reporting the incident to relevant agencies or seeking assistance from the police.

Guidance for pupils

If you think that you are being bullied never be afraid to ask for help from any member of staff, a family member or a friend.

If you think you are being bullied the following responses should help:

- Explain to the bully that their words/actions are upsetting; they may not be aware of this. However, if the bullying continues try not to show your feelings.
- Walk away quickly and confidently, even if you don't feel that way inside.
If you are different in any way, be proud of it – it's good to be an individual.

The bully will not stop if they think they can get away with such behaviour. Discuss the problem with your friends, tell a member of staff or ask your friends to tell a member of staff on your behalf.

Pupil's guide to how to respond if you think someone is being bullied and how to prevent bullying

You can help to stop bullying:

1. If the pupil being bullied is in any danger, fetch help. If they are not in danger your presence may ease the situation so remain together.
2. Show that you and your friends disapprove.
3. Give sympathy and support to others who may be bullied.
4. Be careful about teasing or making personal remarks. If you think they might not find your comments funny don't say them.
5. If you know of serious bullying tell someone. The victim may be too scared or lonely to tell.

Guidance for Parents

Parental involvement

Whenever a serious case of bullying is uncovered the parents or guardian of both the victim and the bully would normally be informed either in writing or by personal contact.

If your child is being bullied

Parents along with peers will probably be the first to hear of a bullying incident. Parents should contact their child's teacher, the Deputy or Director if they are worried.

It is essential to stay calm, supportive and find out the facts of the situation; a situation of alleged bullying can be complex to understand as it is possible that the parties involved with have varying perceptions of the events under investigation. Reassurance will be needed to persuade your child that they have done the right thing by telling you. You may find it helpful to have the following checklist at your side to ensure that correct information is passed to the School:

- Who was involved?
- Where did it take place, when and how often?
- What form did the bullying take?

When you inform the School of these details, you will be told how the School will proceed. The procedures set out in this policy will be followed and we will work with you as required, keeping you informed of action taken. Be reassured that this will be managed sensitively with the needs of all the pupils involved carefully considered.

If your child is involved in the bullying

It is important to work with the school to modify the patterns of behaviour which are causing your child to bully. Do not panic and blame yourself. Acknowledge that these things do happen and the school has mechanisms in place to deal with this issue. It is helpful to recognise some of the reasons why pupils behave in this way from time to time.

Children sometimes bully others because:

- they are not aware of how hurtful it is.
- they are copying the behaviour of older siblings or people they admire.
- they have a temporary difficulty integrating in their peer group.
- they are bullying others because of encouragement from friends.
- they are going through a difficult time personally and need support.
- they have not yet learnt satisfactory ways for making firm relationships.

To stop your child from bullying others:

- Talk with your child and help them to understand that what they are doing is unacceptable as it makes other pupils unhappy.
- Discourage other members of the family from using aggressive behaviour to get what they want.
- Suggest ways of joining in activities with other pupils without bullying.
- Liaise with the School

- Make time to have regular chats about how things are going at school.
- Check that your child has identified an adult at school to whom they can go to if they have a problem or a worry of any kind.

Please note that the School will want and need to take action if bullying occurs. The matter will be sensitively handled but it needs to be effective. Action will be taken in accordance with this policy, together with the procedures in the School's Behaviour and Safeguarding policies.

Guidance

The DfE has published the following guidance document for parents:

Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444865/Advice_for_parents_on_cyberbullying.pdf

Other useful organisations providing support for parents dealing with specific bullying issues include:

www.kidscape.org.uk

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.youngminds.org.uk www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk www.familylives.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk

Anti-Cyberbullying Code: Advice to Pupils

This code is intended to help pupils protect themselves from getting caught up in cyberbullying and to give advice about how to report it when it does happen. Seeing inappropriate comments about oneself on a website or being sent abusive or threatening text messages can cause considerable upset.

1. Respect other people

Remember that when you send a message to someone, you cannot see the impact that your words or images may have on the other person. That is why it is important to always show respect to people and be careful what you say online or what images you send. What you think is a joke may really hurt someone else. Always ask permission before you take a photograph of someone or post online. You also need to think before you allow someone to take your photograph as it may be used by them at a later date without your permission.

If you receive a rude or nasty message or picture about someone else, do not forward it. You could be assisting a bully and even yourself be accused of cyberbullying. You could also be breaking the law.

2. Think first before you send

It is important to think before you send any images or text about yourself or someone else by email or mobile phone, or before you post information on a website. Remember that what you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever. Parents, teachers, friends or future employers may be able to access photographs in years to come.

Remember that even if you are sending messages in non-school time this code of conduct still applies.

3. Protect your password

Take care to ensure that other people do not know your passwords. It is a good idea to change them on a regular basis and you are advised not to use obvious passwords like your name or your date of birth. Choosing hard-to-guess passwords with symbols or numbers will help stop people hacking into your account and pretending to be you. It is also sensible to give your mobile phone number only to trusted friends.

4. Block the Bully

Most responsible websites and services allow you to block or report someone who is behaving badly.

5. Don't retaliate or reply

Replying to bullying messages, particularly in anger, may well be what the bully wants and can easily escalate matters very quickly.

6. Save the evidence

It is important to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. If you are intending to make a complaint, this will help you demonstrate to others what is happening and can be used by the School, Internet service provider, mobile phone company, or even the police to investigate the cyberbullying.

7. Make sure you report incidents of cyberbullying

You have a right not to be harassed and / or being bullied online and you should report incidents of cyberbullying which take place. If you think someone has created a false account to bully you from then report the account to the website.

This policy has been drawn up with regard to:

- Obscene Publications Act 1959
- Protection of Children Act 1978
- Education Act 1986, Section 22
- Education Reform Act 1988, Section 1
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Computer Misuse Act 1990
- Education Act 2002
- Communications Act 2003
- Every Child Matters 2003
- The Equality Act 2010
- DfE Guidance 2017 Preventing & Tackling Bullying
- DfE Guidance 2014, Supporting children and young people who are bullied advice for schools
- DfE Guidance 2014, Cyber-bullying advice for Head teachers and school staff
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, Sept 2020

This policy was adopted by

On

Date to be reviewed

Signed on behalf of the provider

Name of signatory

Role of signatory

Victorious School

1st September 2022

1st September 2023

E Signature



Victoria Gomez-Middleton

Director