

GEMS AKIS SCHOOL POLICIES

Anti-bullying Policy

Guidance for Staff

- Staff must be aware of the policy on bullying
- All staff must challenge any bullying behavior, and support zero-tolerance of bullying.
- Staff must be aware that verbal behavior can be intimidating and is considered a type of bullying
- All staff must be diligent in reporting incidents
- When investigating an incident of apparent bullying, staff must be aware that this may not be the underlying cause of this incident.
- Students must each be given the opportunity to present their version of events.
- Teachers need to be aware of whether the bullying is by an individual or a group of students
- A note must be made in the incident logbook of any incident observed.
- Staff must not walk past any incident and leave it unchallenged.
- Follow agreed procedures for dealing with bullying incidents.

Bullying – Possible signs (for the parents)

Parents and families are often the first to detect that a problem exists. Don't dismiss it. Contact the school immediately if you are worried. Your child may indicate signs or behaviors that he or she is being bullied. If you are concerned and become aware of any of the following, you may wish to contact the school.

Your child may:

- Be frightened of going to school
- Be unwilling to go to school
- Beg you to drive them to school
- Change their route to school
- Begin doing poorly in their schoolwork
- Come home early or regularly with clothes or books destroyed
- Become stressed, stop eating.
- Have unexplained bruises, scratches, and cuts
- Have their possessions go 'missing.'
- Continually lose their pocket money
- Refuse to say what is wrong.

Talk with teachers about bullying:

- Try and stay calm – bear in mind that the teacher may have no idea that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident.
- Be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened – give dates, places, and names of the other children involved.
- Make a note of what action the school intends to take.
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help your child or the school.
- Stay in touch with the school; let them know if things improve or if problems continue.

GUIDELINES ON DEALING WITH BULLYING

1. Definitions and Types of Bullying:

- Bullying is verbal or physical intimidation, which causes physical, mental, and/or emotional distress to a victim who cannot defend himself/herself.
- Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional, and peer-to-peer, as well as involves:
- Gender-Based Violence – This involves harmful acts directed at an individual **based on gender**.
- Teenage relationship abuse – This kind of teen dating abuse involves a pattern of abusive behavior to control another person.
- Harmful sexual behavior or sexting – Sexting is an act of sending sexual text messages.
- Bullying exists in all schools to a greater or lesser degree and is one of the children's main concerns.
- Boys are more likely to use physical bullying, while girls use verbal bullying. Studies show that most bullies and victims have low self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Bullying is to be taken seriously by the school.

2. Preventive Measures

The following preventative measures are recommended:

- Staff should emphasize each child's individual value in the eyes of the school.
- Staff should create an atmosphere of concern and trust so that children feel they can share problems and worries with staff.
- Staff should address the issue early in the school year in an assembly:
 - Make it clear that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in school.
 - Encourage the children to report bullying incidents as soon as possible after they happen. Emphasize that this is responsible behavior and not "telling tales".
 - Teach the children to feel responsible for each other's safety. Help them to grasp the principle that there are no bystanders in bullying.
 - Conduct awareness programs to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion

- Staff should ensure adequate supervision of the children at all times. If some areas of the school cannot be supervised at all times, spot-checks are helpful.
- Teachers should discuss bullying in class. 'Teach children how to react and handle being bullied or witnessing someone being bullied.
- All staff should be aware of the effects of "teachers-bullying". All students should be treated equally and with respect.
- No one should humiliate a child by making jokes at his/her expense.

3. Signs of Bullying

Staff should also watch for signs that a child is being bullied, including:

- Fear of walking to or from school.
- Deterioration in schoolwork.
- A child becoming withdrawn or starting to stammer. Unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts, etc.
- Unexplained loss of possessions or money.
- Unexplained damage to a child's books or clothes.
- A child refusing to say what is wrong or giving improbable excuses to explain any of the above.

4. Dealing with Bullying Incidents:

- If the bully is caught in the act, remove the victim from the scene as quickly as possible and tell the bully that he/she will be dealt with later.
- Comfort the victim immediately and reassure him/her that they are safe and that the necessary procedures and precautions will be taken to ensure this does not reoccur. Don't be aggressive and don't intervene physically unless absolutely necessary. If a victim "tells," take it seriously and assure him/her that the matter will be dealt with swiftly.
- Ask for a written report (child's age permitting).
- In both cases, the following procedure should be implemented: Take the matter to the AP/Guidance Counselor/SAO, who should deal with it as soon as possible.
- Early intervention is important: failure to deal with the bully promotes further aggression. The parents of both the victim and the bully should be involved. Invite them to attend any interviews with their child. If this is not possible inform them of all discussions and decisions. The victim and the bully should be interviewed separately and then together.
- A record of all incidents and subsequent actions taken must be kept.

5. How to deal with the bully:

- Help the bully understand that his/her behavior is unacceptable and will have consequences taken by the school as well as possible natural consequences (He may bully someone who can bully him back – How would that make him feel?)
- Make the bully aware of the distress caused to the victim.
- Explore reasons for bullying and ways to help the bully control his/her aggression and deal with feelings.
- Help to find something he/she can do well, which can foster his/her self-esteem. If the problem is deep-seated, outside help from a child psychologist may be required.
- Punish the bully, record the punishment and show the bully it has been recorded. Punishments should not involve aggression or humiliation.

6. Support for bullies and victims:

- It should be made clear to everyone in the school that they have the right to attend school without fear of being bullied.
- There should be frequent open class discussions regarding bullying.
- There should be regular meetings where bullies and victims may meet separately or together to work through their problems with staff.
- Clear and explicit rules and corresponding courses of action must be agreed upon by all staff, students, and parent representatives. Teachers are to meet and discuss agreed procedures.
- Students will be encouraged to write their concerns on paper and hand them to the class teacher.
- Students will be made aware that they are able to visit the Guidance Counselor's office to discuss any fears they may have and that it will remain confidential.
- There should be an assembly on bullying once per semester, constructive supervision – having a chat with students while on duty, etc. can help the victims and the bully.
- The anti-bullying campaign is held during the first term of every school year, where activities should include but are not limited to Role-playing, and a school pledge to not bully and report any incidents witnessed.

7. How to help the victim: Suggestions:

- If a child reports an incident, never brush it aside. Take all reports seriously.
- Help the victim to see that what has happened is not his/her fault and that he/she is not to blame. (Victims often feel that they are somehow responsible or that something is wrong with them).
- Give the victim closure of knowing the bully is probably sad/angry/has low self-esteem, and that is why he/she does this behavior (re-stating that this is an unacceptable way to deal with feelings)
- Reassure the victim that he/she is safe, and the behavior of the bully is not at all acceptable.
- Comfort the victim by ensuring he/she feels loved and cared for. Constantly remind him/her that he/she is not alone, and you are always available for him/her to talk to and confide in.
- Discuss with the victim how he/she feels and what he/she would like to do regarding this situation before giving your own suggestions (students may not always be ready to face their bullying or deal with the situation).
- Discuss with the victim how he/she should handle this situation and any further incidents.
- Ensure recording of all the meeting minutes and actions are taken.
- Implement peer support programs, such as buddy systems for new or vulnerable students.

Cyberbullying

- All students are made aware of the impact of cyberbullying and the ways it differs from other bullying - including the risks of misinterpretation of comments posted. This is communicated to students through assemblies, constant reminders by teachers, and internet safety campaigns.
- Al Khaleej International School takes reasonable steps to block access to unsuitable internet sites, including social networking sites, chat rooms, individual website owners/forums, and message board hosts. AKIS controls the filter and is able to respond immediately in case of any red alerts.
- AKIS is able to conduct a search of internet use records and act accordingly to stop the misuse of school equipment and systems.

- Students and staff are advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and the police can be involved to enable the service provider to look into the data of another user.
- AKIS will provide help and support for parents with regard to net safety 'netiquette', e-safety, and digital literacy are actively promoted and discussed as part of the curriculum.
- Students are made aware that some cyberbullying activities could be criminal offenses. Internet safety day is celebrated, and campaigns are held to create awareness.
- AKIS reinforces statutory guidelines about using social network sites, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat.

Anti-bullying student-school Contract

We at Al Khaleej International School have a zero-tolerance policy for bullying. We, as a school, strive to create an environment that is happy and supportive of all our students and staff. In order to have the full commitment of every member of our community to our anti-bullying policy, we will ask everyone to sign this contract. This will help to ensure that Al Khaleej National School remains clean of bullying.

Students must be made aware of bullying through zero-tolerance bullying campaigns (regular intervals) and must promise to:

- *Support the school's aims by reporting all bullying incidents, whether directed towards themselves or someone else.*
- Parents must be made aware of bullying through campaigns, workshops, and lectures and must undertake to:*

Parents must be made aware of bullying through campaigns, workshops, and lectures and must undertake to:

- *Support the school's aims by watching for signs of bullying and communicating these to the school.*

Staff must be made aware of bullying through campaigns, workshops, and lectures and must undertake to:

- *Investigate all reported or observed incidents and take the appropriate actions.*



EDUCATION

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