



BIS Anti-Bullying Policy

Last Reviewed: September 2021

BIS ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

The British International School and Montessori Education, Freetown is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at the school. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to raise this and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

What is bullying?

UK guidance defines bullying as actions that are meant to be hurtful, and which happen on a regular basis. BIS understands bullying to be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect (for example, being ignored or not spoken to). It is also understood to be the use of aggression or unkind behaviour with the intention of hurting another person on several occasions over a period of time. It results in pain and distress to the victim.

BIS recognises three main types of bullying:

- physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft)
- verbal (e.g. name calling, racist remarks - this may also be via cell phone or email)
- indirect (e.g. spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups)

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

For information about the school's approach to *cyber-bullying*, please refer to the BIS Digital use policy and guidelines.

All BIS students are encouraged to report bullying to a member of staff or to any responsible, trusted adult.

What Bullying is Not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. At BIS it is recognised that there are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

- Mutual conflict

In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

- Social rejection or dislike

Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

- Single episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation

Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying. However, since the School has a duty of care to provide a student with a safe and supportive School environment, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not ignored or condoned.

BIS Response to a bullying incident

When bullying is reported to a member of staff the following actions are taken:

1. Determine whether the incident reported is bullying or not, or report the incident to a more senior teacher, such as a Head of Year, or member of the Leadership Team
2. Counsel the victim
3. Investigate the incident as close to the time it happens as possible: bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and stopped quickly
4. In the case of incidents involving cyber bullying, staff should refer to the BIS Digital Policy on the school website and follow its guidance.

When the incident is determined to be a bullying incident, this procedure will be followed:

- Remove the student(s) from the scene of the incident
- Meet with the appropriate senior teacher: Year Leader, or Principal
- If a senior teacher is not available, the student is removed from the class or immediate area until a meeting can take place
- Inform parents (by phone or face to face – not via email)
- Record details on the school behaviour log

In addition to the above responses the following actions will take place:

1. Attempts will be made to help the bully or bullies change their behaviour. This is a long term action and may involve Counsellors, Year Leaders, the Inclusion Manager, House Staff or the Senior Leadership Team, as appropriate.
2. If appropriate, parents will also be asked to come into school to discuss the issue.

Parental response to a bullying incident

The school does not encourage parents to approach the parents of other children involved in incidents, directly. All bullying incidents should be followed up by the school and any communication with parents should be conducted by the staff members directly involved, by the Principal.

REVIEW DATES

This policy is effective from: 1st September 2021 and supersedes all previous policies regarding disciplinary. This policy is due for review and republication on: 1st September 2022