

Policy: **Anti-Bullying**



St Edward's
College,
Malta

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Who we are

Mission Statement

At St Edward's College we strive to create exemplary citizens in this increasingly globalised and technological world, placing strong emphasis on character formation, genuine intercultural understanding and leadership skills which will assist them to contribute to the well-being of society.

About us

St Edwards is an Independent private school which accepts students from Early Childhood to IBDP Sixth Form. We have a modern boarding section for students age 11 years up. Our educational experience has shaped us into the person we are today. Whether we learned from our own experiences, from our parents, grandparents, friends or teachers, we have gone through the 'learning experience'. Dedicated, caring and experienced professionals are the key to our success. The underlying approach to all lessons throughout St Edward's is simple. We do not want our students to solely learn, unless there is understanding of a concept/topic there is little point in learning and to understand one needs to think. Hence, TUL - Think, Understand, Learn.

At St Edward's we deliver our lessons with the most current, tried and proven international methodologies.

Introduction and Definition

Introduction

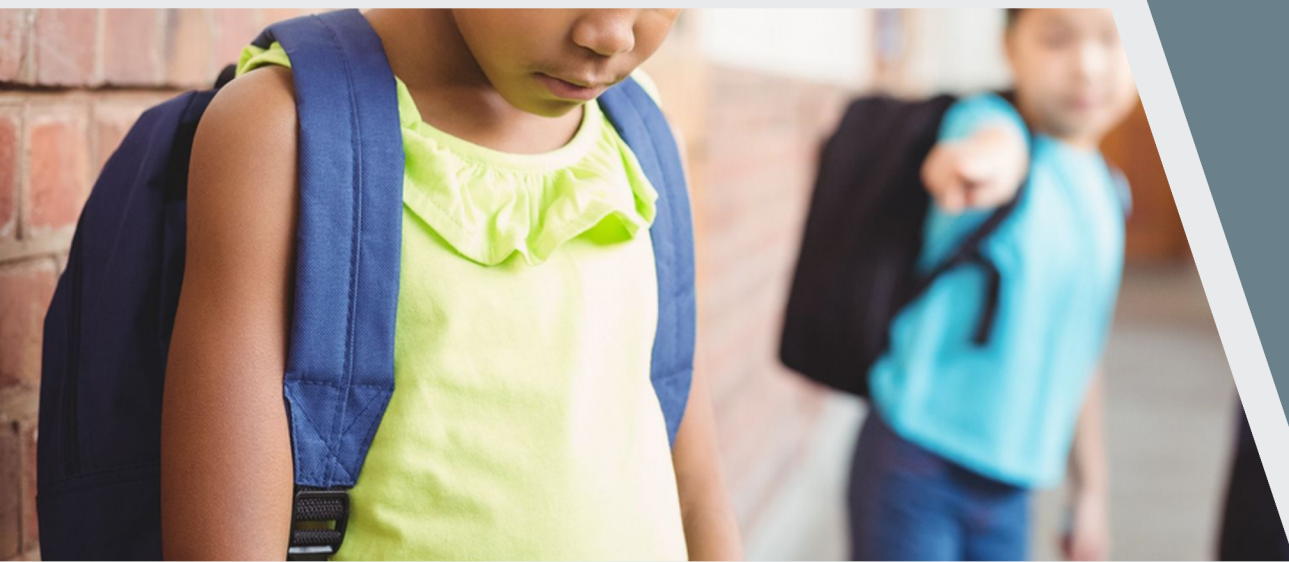
Bullying is action taken by one or more students with the deliberate intention of continually hurting another child, either physically or emotionally.

Bullying is persistent. Emotional bullying can be via social network sites (i.e. cyber bullying) text messages and voice mails on mobile phones as well as through verbal means such as name-calling.



Definition

Bullying is “repeated, negative behaviour that is intended to make others feel upset, uncomfortable or unsafe”. It must be both repeated (more than once) and intended (done on purpose) for something to be considered bullying behaviour.



Aims and Objectives

Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. At St Edwards we therefore do all we can to prevent it by developing a College wide ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable. As a College we aim to produce a safe and secure environment where all College members can work without anxiety.

This policy aims to produce a consistent College response to any bullying incidents that may occur. We aim to make all those connected with the College aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication and prevention of bullying by our students in College and outside.

College members' **Rights**

At St Edwards we believe that all our College members have a right:

- to feel safe, secure and loved
- to be protected from all bullying including that related to SEN, disability, physical appearance, sexuality, race, religion, culture and language
- to grow having their individuality valued and respected



The role of **The SMT**

It is the responsibility of the all staff to implement the College's anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff are aware of the College's policy and know how to deal with any incidents of bullying.

The SMT must ensure that all members of the College community know that bullying is wrong and that it is unacceptable behaviour. Staff should take every opportunity to draw the attention of students to this fact for example, if an incident occurs, the Head of Section may decide to use assembly time as a forum in which to discuss with other students why this behaviour is wrong, and why a pupil is being punished. This needs to be done sensitively and should avoid naming individuals.

At St Edwards we constantly revisit core values in assemblies and at other times.

The SMT sets the College climate of mutual support and praise for success, making bullying less likely. When students feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming environment, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.



We also expect our students to follow the basic rules of good conduct:

- Be kind and helpful – Don't hurt people's feelings.
- Be gentle – Don't hurt anyone.
- Listen – Don't Interrupt.
- Focus – Don't waste your own or other people's time.
- Be honest – Don't cover up the truth.
- Look after property – Don't waste or damage things.

The role of **The Staff**

Staff at St Edwards take all forms of bullying seriously and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place. They keep their own records of all incidents that happen in their class and that they are aware of in the school.

If staff witness an act of bullying, they will do all they can to support the person who is being bullied. If anybody is being bullied over a period of time, then, after consultation with the Head of Section/School Counsellor/Headmaster, the parents will be informed.

If, as staff, we become aware of bullying taking place between members of a class, we will deal with the issue immediately. This may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying and suitable work with the student who has carried out the bullying to ensure this does not reoccur. We will spend time talking to the student who has bullied, explaining why the action was wrong and we will endeavour to help them change their behaviour in future.

If a student is repeatedly involved in bullying others, we will inform the Head of Section/School Counsellor/Headmaster. The Head of Section will then invite the student's parents into the school to discuss the situation. In more extreme cases, for example where these initial discussions have proven ineffective, the School Counsellor may contact external support agencies such as The Malta Anti-Bullying Service, after informing parents.



Staff will attempt to support all students in their class or tutor group and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. By praising, rewarding and celebrating the success of all children, we aim to prevent incidents of bullying. Pupils are taught about building positive relationships with peers, conflict resolution and the right/wrong behaviours, by their teachers in a variety of curriculum settings.

All members of staff are expected to lead by example.

The role of **The Parents**

Parents, who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately.

Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

Information and advice to parents is available whether their child is a perpetrator or a victim.

Where parents feel their child is being bullied by a member of staff, they should arrange to see the relevant Head of Section or the Headmaster.

Bullying of staff by parents is unacceptable.

Appendix **ONE**

Further information and advice for staff

Verbal Bullying Includes

- Teasing meant to tear down another person.
- Name Calling
- Using words as a means of controlling another individual
- Threatening physical harm if the victim does not fall under the bully's control
- Spreading untruths or false rumours about the victim.

Effects of Verbal Bullying

- Poor self-esteem.
- Inability to tell truth from lies.
- Approval addiction formed out of a need to please another individual due to past bullying.
- Depression.
- Feelings of helplessness or that the victim has no choice but to obey their bully.
- Thoughts of suicide.

Appendix **ONE**

Further information and advice for staff

About Cyber Bullying

- The sending of threatening messages, pictures, and/or videos through the means of internet and mobiles.
- Children do not always talk about online bullying or perhaps see it as the norm.
- Research has highlighted the fact that around 10 per cent of children aged 11 in Malta report being cyberbullied.
- Today's digital world means that bullying can be relentless, 24 hours a day, following children into their homes, the very place they should feel safe.
- This can have a serious impact on their wellbeing and mental health, affecting the self-worth of individuals, leaving them feeling isolated and potentially triggering depression.

Where does bullying take place?

- On school transport.
- Before school starts.
- During break time.
- During lessons
- Between lessons.
- All unsupervised areas and times increase possibility of bullying.

Appendix **ONE**

Who is Involved?

The Bully

- Appears to be overconfident.
- Needs to control and dominate.
- Projects anger onto others.
- Needs attention from peers.
- Might have aggressive role-models who model violent behaviour.
- Often finds it difficult to admit bad behaviour.
- Often defiant towards authority figures.

The Victim

A. The Passive Victim

- Sensitive.
- Lacks social skills (sharing, compromises, apologies, I messages).
- Different in some obvious respect.
- Feels isolated at school/ lonely/ depressed.
- Learning problems.
- Unable to defend themselves.
- Anxious and insecure.

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B. The Provocative Victim

- Usually has few friends.
- Pester and irritate others.
- Quick tempered.
- Easily provoked.
- Tends to fight back.
- Provokes attacks.

C. The Bystander

- Afraid of associating with victim – fear bully will turn on them.
- Wants to help – does not know what to do.
- Feels guilty for not acting.
- Fears reporting – being a tell-tail.
- Does not like what s/he sees – feels powerless.
- Feels unsafe – unable to take action.
- Feels a loss of control.

Appendix **ONE**

Bullying is sometimes inadvertently promoted and permitted when adults:

- Are dismissive of what children tell them.
- Shirk their responsibility of intervening against bullying.
- Pick on particular individuals.
- 'Correct' children in a way that humiliates them.
- Humiliate children in front of their peers.
- Are impatient with the less able.
- Are unapproachable and insensitive.
- Encourage retaliation.
- Are abusive of their power.
- Are aggressive and sarcastic.

Staff can help prevent bullying by:

- Taking immediate action when bullying is observed.
- Confronting bullies in private.
- Using a discipline referral and note bullying behaviour in the report.
- Notifying parents of victims and bullies when a problem occurs.
- Providing students opportunity to talk about bullying, provide safe ways to report.

Appendix ONE

- Referring cases to the SMT.
- Referring both the victim and bullies for counselling.
- Providing protection for victims. This may include a buddy system, extra supervision at noted areas of concern.
- Listening to parents who report bullying.
- Including classroom rules/agreements/"contracts" against bullying.
- Developing an action plan to ensure that students know what to do when they observe a situation.
- Providing classroom activities and discussion about bullying.
- Focusing on developing empathy and respect for others
- Working on friendship, assertiveness and mediation skills.
- Acknowledging students' efforts and praise appropriately.
- Repeating awareness-raising work throughout the school community.

Staff can help and support bystanders by:

- Normalizing fears and worries.
- Explaining the importance of being in a group - strength in numbers.
- Communicating the moral expectation of students to take action and reassuring them that they will be protected.
- Teaching skills and strategies to take a stand.
- Acknowledging and rewarding caring behaviours.

Appendix **ONE**

Why Make Changes? Because ...

- A student might occasionally find an excuse for missing school because of a fear of being bullied.
- Bullying in schools is a reality and in the absence of awareness and intervention, it poses a serious hazard for many students.
- Long term victims may develop mental and health issues.
- Bullying is an entry level to violence and may lead to more serious situations.

What other general action can be taken?

- Emphasize ongoing awareness-raising work in the school community (staff & students).
- Day long anti-bullying workshops for students.
- Display anti-bullying posters.
- Hold occasional anti-bullying assembly for students.
- Include friendship as a theme across the curriculum.
- Awareness for Parents in newsletters and meetings
- Parent, Student, and Teacher surveys

Appendix **ONE**

A Positive Way Forward

- Supporting the bullies/victims/bystanders is the most effective way of helping
- Focus – how victim/bully feels.
- Encourages bully to think – how did my behaviour make victim feel?
- Draws bystanders into finding a solution to problem – becoming Upstanders.
- Non-confrontational.
- Restorative Justice approach – how do we repair the harm we have caused?



Appendix TWO

Advice to Parents

A. How can I help if my child is being bullied?

If your child is being bullied, don't panic. Your key role is listening, calming and providing reassurance that the situation can get better when action is taken.

- Discuss the situation with your child's teacher or Head teacher – or the lead adult wherever the bullying is taking place. Every child has a right to a safe environment in which to learn and play. The College has an Anti-Bullying Policy Schools which sets out the measures that will be taken to prevent all forms of bullying between pupils. Ask for a soft or hard copy for your reference.
- A good first step is to contact the College and arrange a meeting with your child's class teacher, form tutor or Head of Section who can refer you on to the School Counsellor and/or the Headmaster. Explain to them that you wish to work together to ensure that the bullying behaviour stops and that your child feels supported. Ask for a written record of the meeting and the agreed action plan. Agree timescales for review.

Appendix TWO

- It's not easy to hear that your child is experiencing bullying behaviour and of course you will want to do all you can to help.
- Definition - Bullying is "repeated, negative behaviour that is intended to make others feel upset, uncomfortable or unsafe". It must be both repeated (more than once) and intended (done on purpose) for something to be considered bullying behaviour.
- Assure them that the bullying is not their fault and that they have family that will support them. Reassure them that you will not take any action without discussing it with them first.
- Remember that your child and you will get through this with the right action and support and remember to stay calm. Young people often feel that they need to deal with bullying behaviour alone and your child may worry that telling you will make you angry or upset.
- It's important that you have the tools you need to keep your child safe, happy and free from bullying behaviour.

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- Listen to your child's experience and allow them to 'tell their story'. Younger children may express themselves through play or drawing. Remind them that your job as their parent is to keep them safe and this may involve speaking to the school. Ensure that you work with them to come up with a plan of action that they feel a part of.
- Don't encourage retaliation to bullying – such as violent actions. It's important for children to avoid hitting or punching an abusive peer. Reacting that way has negative and unpredictable results—they may be hurt even further and find that they are labelled as the problem. Rather suggest that they walk away and seek help.
- Find out what your child wants to happen next. Help to identify the choices open to them; the potential next steps to take; and the skills they may have to help solve the problems.
- Start a log of incidents but try not to get bogged down. Instead, focus on the impact on your child and how those around can help them to feel happier and safer.
- Encourage your child to get involved in activities that build their confidence and esteem and help them to form friendships outside of school (or wherever the bullying is taking place).

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- Whatever action you take, the bullying behaviour may not stop immediately. In the meantime, plan out with your child the support they may need. Some children may benefit from extra-curricular activities such as sport, drama or music to boost their self-esteem. If the bullying behaviour has impacted on your child's mental health, don't be afraid to speak to your GP or look for an online or local face-to-face youth counselling service.
- If the bullying behaviour has taken place online, the Headmaster does have the power to discipline behaviour that has happened outside of school and affects their pupils. Schools have a duty of care towards young people regardless of where and when the bullying behaviour has taken place.



Appendix TWO

Advice to Parents

B. My child is being accused of bullying others

It is very difficult for parents and carers when they find out that their child has been involved in a bullying incident – perhaps even more so if their child is the one accused of bullying behaviour.

They need to feel they can talk to you if there is bullying happening in their class or school. Sometimes children and young people can be pulled into bullying behaviour by friends or the wider peer group – this is particularly true of hurtful comments and images spread through social networking sites. Some top tips for parents include:

- If the College contacts you to say your child has been involved in bullying incident stay calm and make sure you gather all the facts relating to the incident. Ask to see evidence if it is available (for example: if the alleged bullying is through the internet or phones). Ask for a copy of the College Anti-bullying Policy so you can ensure that they are following agreed procedures.

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- Take time to listen to your child's side of the story – but keep an open mind. If the school share information or evidence that shocks you (children can sometimes behave very differently away from their parents) again stay calm and take time to talk through the incident with your child.
- Make sure your child knows what bullying behaviour is and why it is wrong
- Make sure your child knows they can talk to you, or to another adult if they are worried about bullying
- Help your child to realise that no one has the right to pressure them into something they don't want to do – this includes bullying others
- Make sure they are not bullying others in retaliation for bullying they have suffered – find out if there is a wider culture of bullying in the school or environment where it happened
- Talk to your child about information that is shared through social networking sites – let them know that they shouldn't upload comments or images that could hurt someone else – or pass on content that is designed to hurt someone else. Let them know most social networking sites have report buttons if they have seen bullying behaviour and they want to stop it.

Appendix TWO

- Make it clear that you do not tolerate the use of disrespectful and hurtful language and behaviour as a family (it's vital that you model this as parents)
- Try not to see the behaviour as a permanent reflection of their character - but make clear the behaviour you would like to change. It may be that their current friendship group is having a negative effect on their behaviour - in which case you should talk about what it means to be a friend, and gently encourage them to form more positive relationships.

Ultimately you are not the first - and you will not be the last parent to have to face this. Don't blame yourself - today is the time for change.

Contact Us

If you encounter any sort of bullying your main point of contact should be your child's teacher and Section Head.

- ***Phone***



+356 27881199

- ***Message***



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