

Anti-Bullying Policy

The Company's Anti-Bullying Objectives

- All staff, students and parents to have an understanding of what bullying is and what the Company's anti-bullying policy is
- All staff, students and parents to know that bullying and abusive behaviour will not be tolerated
- All staff, students and parents to understand that bullying will be taken seriously and acted upon

Bullying defined

Bullying is defined as "the use of superior strength or influence to intimidate (someone), typically to force them to do something." Bullying is essentially unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time and can be seen in both staff and student behaviour. Bullying can be:

- verbal: teasing, name-calling, spreading rumours, sarcasm, taunting, threats
- physical: hitting, kicking, punching, pushing etc.
- social / emotional: excluding people on purpose, embarrassing others in public
- racist / cultural: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- religious: creed, traditions, clothing etc.
- sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- homophobic: because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- disability: physical, emotional, academic, mental
- cyber: using ICT, mobile phones, social networks, and e-mail, to deliberately upset someone else

Harassment – aggressive pressure or intimidation – is a common form of bullying.

Some forms of bullying are **illegal** and may be reported to the police. These include:

- violence or assault
- theft
- repeated harassment or intimidation, e.g. name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages
- hate crimes

Possible signs of bullying (but not limited to)

- student becoming withdrawn, anxious, or reduced self-confidence
- student becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- changes in the student's usual routine
- student starts stammering
- student attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- student is frightened of attending classes / sessions
- sudden decrease in performance during classes / sessions

- student wanting to skip classes / sessions or trying to find reasons to do so
- student cries him/herself to sleep at night, has nightmares or starts wetting the bed
- student regularly feels ill / develops mysterious injuries
- student refusing to get on excursion / airport coach
- student's regularly "looses" his/ her pocket money
- student asks for money or starts stealing money / or other valuable items (to pay bully)
- student's possessions are getting damaged or go missing
- student has unexplained cuts or bruises
- student is bullying others
- student stops eating
- student is frightened and does not wish to speak to a member of staff
- student is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- student is nervous & tense when he / she receives a cyber message
- student becomes very sensitive over any nationality/race issues
- student gives improbable excuses for any of the above

Other problems could be behind the signs and behaviours mentioned above, however, bullying should be considered as a possibility and should be investigated.

Bullying hurts. It can have severe, long-term, consequences for the victim. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying, instead, everybody has the right to be treated with **respect**.

Bullying is mostly about **education** – teaching what is acceptable and what is bullying. Different nationalities will have different ideas, what one student construes as playful and/or just banter can be very upsetting and hurtful to another.

Action if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected (by students or staff), the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Handling Allegation' section of the Exsportise Safeguarding Policy.

Staff actions to help the victim and prevent bullying while at an Exsportise Course:

- All signs of bullying are taken very seriously
- All children are encouraged to speak and share their concerns
- Exsportise camps are open environments, where students should feel free to approach the Centre Manager, or any other staff member to open up about any concern
- Staff will investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. The victim and the bully(ies) will be spoken to separately
- Children will be reassured that staff can be trusted and will help them, although staff cannot promise to tell anyone else (however, this will be limited only to those who need to know, i.e. Welfare Manager)
- Staff who have been approached by a child with a disclosure will keep a record of what is said (what happened, by whom, when) using the database logging system
- Staff will report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL, the Centre Manager at each venue)

Action taken towards the bully(ies):

- Bully(ies) will be talked with, the situation explained, and try and made understood the consequences of their behaviour. An apology to the victim(s) is sought
- The bully's parents are informed
- We insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensates the victim
- Senior staff, such as the DSL, Medical Officers and House Parents provide support for the victim's coach and/or teacher if required
- Sanctions will be imposed as necessary, in severe cases exclusion will be considered
- Staff will encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour
- Senior staff will keep in contact with the families to report on progress
- Head Office as well as staff on site will be informed of action taken on a need to know basis
- A written record of action taken will be kept

Most 'low level' incidents will be dealt with at the time by coaches and teachers. However, if the bullying is severe (e.g. a serious assault), or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it, incidents should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Centre Manager or Deputy DSLs at Head Office (Bram van Asselt and Verena Grave).

Useful websites

- Dept for Education Anti-Bullying information - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>
- www.kidscape.org.uk
- www.bullying.org
- www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- www.bullyfreezone.co.uk
- www.bullying.co.uk
- www.beatbullying.org
- Childnet International - <https://www.childnet.com/>
- EACH (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia) - <https://each.education/>