



Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction - Our Stand Against Bullying

At Merryland International School, we take a firm **zero-tolerance stance against bullying in all its forms**. Bullying undermines the values of respect, empathy, safety, and inclusion that define our school community. We are committed to fostering a safe, positive, and empowering environment where **every student can thrive without fear of harassment or harm**.

What Is Bullying?

Definition:

Bullying is defined as **intentional, repeated behavior that causes harm**, exploits a **power imbalance**, and creates fear, exclusion, or distress in the victim. Bullying can be direct or indirect and may be physical, verbal, relational, or digital.

Types of Bullying:

- **Physical:** Hitting, pushing, kicking, damaging property.
- **Verbal:** Name-calling, insults, teasing, threats.
- **Relational:** Exclusion, manipulation, rumor-spreading.
- **Cyberbullying:** Using digital means (social media, emails, messaging apps) to harass, intimidate, or humiliate.
- **Indirect:** Persuading others to mistreat someone or socially isolate them.

Bullying involves:

- Intent to cause harm.
- A power imbalance.
- Repeated actions.
- Victim's experience of unfairness or distress.



Kinds of Bullying	Direct	Indirect
Verbal Abuse	Verbal insults Unfair criticism Name calling	Persuading another person to criticise or insult someone Spreading malicious rumours Anonymous phone calls and emails
Gestural Abuse	Threatening or obscene gestures Menacing stares	Deliberate turning away or averting one's gaze to ignore someone
Physical means	Striking Throwing things Using a weapon Removing and hiding belongings	Getting another person to assault someone
Relational bullying	Forming coalitions against someone	Persuading people to exclude someone

Declaration of Rights

Every member of our school community—students, teachers, staff, and parents—has the right to:

- Be safe from all forms of bullying and harassment.
- Be treated with dignity and respect regardless of race, gender, nationality, ability, or personal background.
- Learn and work in a secure and supportive environment.
- Report bullying without fear of retaliation or judgment.
- Be included in school activities free from intimidation or exclusion.



Responsibilities of Witnesses and Bystanders

All individuals in the school community, especially students, share a **collective responsibility** to act when they witness bullying:

Those who witness bullying are expected to:

- **Speak out safely and respectfully** if possible.
- **Report the incident** immediately to a trusted adult, teacher, or the Anti-Bullying Committee.
- **Support the victim** through empathy and inclusion.
- **Refuse to remain passive**, join in, or encourage the bullying in any form.
- Promote a culture where **positive bystander intervention** is encouraged and celebrated.

We promote a “No Silent Spectators” culture where everyone is responsible for preventing harm.

What Merryland Will Do to Prevent Bullying

We believe that **prevention is the most effective form of protection**. Merryland International School adopts a **whole-school approach** by embedding respect, responsibility, and resilience into every aspect of school life.

Our proactive strategies include:

A. Promoting a Positive School Culture

- Celebrate diversity and inclusion through events, assemblies, and classroom activities.
- Emphasize respect, empathy, and cooperation as core values.

B. Regular Awareness Programs

- Conduct anti-bullying campaigns, awareness weeks, and theme-based assemblies.
- Integrate anti-bullying themes into Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) across subjects.

C. Empowering Staff and Students

- Train staff to identify and respond to bullying using strategies outlined in international best practices (e.g., Ken Rigby’s intervention methods).
- Empower students through leadership programs, peer mentorship, and **Anti-Bullying Ambassadors**.



D. Clear Rules and Reporting Channels

- Publish and communicate clear behavior expectations.
- Offer confidential and accessible reporting tools for students and parents.

E. Family and Community Engagement

- Partner with parents to build awareness and extend prevention beyond the classroom.
- Collaborate with ADEK and child protection bodies when needed.

Reporting and Responding to Bullying

When a case is reported, the school will:

A. Ensure Immediate Safety

- Protect the student from further harm.
- Offer immediate emotional and physical support.

B. Conduct a Fair Investigation

- Gather statements from the victim, bully, witnesses, and staff.
- Maintain confidentiality and objectivity.

C. Apply Appropriate Disciplinary Action

- Enforce age-appropriate consequences in line with the school behavior policy.
- Use restorative practices to encourage understanding and responsibility.

D. Support for All Students

- **Victims** receive counseling, peer support, and reintegration plans.
- **Bullies** receive behavioral intervention plans, counseling, and close monitoring.

E. Ongoing Monitoring and Documentation

- Keep comprehensive records of the incident and follow-up steps.
- Monitor involved students and report to ADEK in severe or repeated cases.



Commitment to Parent-School Collaboration

Our school recognizes that effective prevention and resolution of bullying requires **strong collaboration between the school and parents or guardians.**

We are committed to working in **active partnership with families** to create a safe and supportive environment for all students.

In cases involving bullying, the school will:

- **Engage parents or guardians promptly and respectfully** when bullying incidents occur, ensuring they are fully informed of the situation, investigation, and intended actions.
- **Work cooperatively with families** of both the student who was bullied and the student who engaged in bullying, to understand the context and provide coordinated support.
- **Involve parents in the development of action and support plans**, where applicable, including agreed steps for behavior improvement, monitoring, and emotional support.
- **Encourage ongoing dialogue** with parents throughout the resolution process to ensure transparency, consistency, and shared responsibility.
- **Provide resources and guidance** to help parents reinforce positive behaviour, digital safety, and respectful interactions outside of school.
- **Respect the confidentiality and dignity of all students and families** involved, while ensuring the well-being and safety of the school community.

Through this commitment, the school and parents form a united front to prevent bullying, respond appropriately when it occurs, and support all children in developing empathy, responsibility, and resilience.

Policy Evaluation Plan

Our school is committed to regularly reviewing and improving its Anti-Bullying Policy to ensure its continued effectiveness, relevance, and alignment with best practices in child protection and inclusive education.

To evaluate this policy, the school will:

- **Conduct an annual review** of the policy's effectiveness through data collection on reported incidents, resolution outcomes, student and staff feedback, and incident trends.

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- **Gather input from key stakeholders**, including students, parents, teachers, support staff, and school leadership through surveys, focus groups, or community meetings.
- **Monitor the implementation of preventive and responsive measures** to ensure consistency and compliance with ADEK's Private School Policy Guidelines and UAE child safeguarding requirements.
- **Review updates to national and international standards**, including ADEK circulars, SCMC recommendations, and UNICEF child protection frameworks, to ensure the policy remains up to date.
- **Submit findings and recommendations to the school's senior leadership team**, and amend the policy as needed to reflect improvements or address gaps.

Policy Review and Accountability

This policy will be:

- **Formally reviewed every year**, with the next review due in **August 2026**.
- Evaluated using data on bullying trends, stakeholder feedback, and effectiveness of interventions.
- Updated in line with ADEK, SCMC, and UNICEF child protection guidelines.

Conclusion

Through this comprehensive Anti-Bullying Policy, Merryland International School reaffirms its commitment to nurturing a **safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment**. Every student has the right to thrive, and it is the responsibility of our entire community to ensure that right is fully protected—through prevention, action, and unity.

Principal



Merryland International School is an outstanding, ISO 9001-certified, British Curriculum K-12 school located in Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. providing high quality education to pupils of more than 40 nationalities. Merryland has been a pioneer in education for the last four decades remaining true to its motto 'Changing lives... Nations wide'.