Anti-Bullying Policy

United School International

USI Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

Learning, teaching and community well-being are enhanced when positive attitudes are prevalent within a school. However, they can be compromised if the attitudes are incompatible with the school's ethos and expectations.

Our Values Statement makes it clear that USI is "characterised by a happy, purposeful atmosphere, in which all members of the community are valued" and that "everyone in the USI community can expect to be treated honestly, fairly and with respect by all". The school is an environment free of prejudice, discrimination and intimidation, and every parent, student and member of staff are committed to upholding these values.

We will be firm with anyone who compromises the learning or well-being of others and will take a strong stance against bullying of any type since it indicates a lack of appreciation for the feelings of others. We will take care to prevent intimidation or taunting using racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist language or accusations, or towards people with special educational needs or other disabilities.

This policy sets out how we uphold these statements by preventing or tackling bullying. It should be considered in conjunction with, and with reference to:

- USIs Mission Statement
- USIs Behaviour Policy
- USIs Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- USIs Staff and Student Handbooks
- USIs Concerns & Complaints Policy.

What is 'Bullying'?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. Bullying can cause deep distress, to the extent of victims refusing to attend school or even, in extreme cases, attempting or committing suicide.

Four main types of bullying can be identified:

- **Physical**   -   hitting, kicking, spitting, taking or hiding belongings.
- **Verbal**   -   name-calling, teasing, insulting, threatening, writing or sending unkind notes
  or
  messages, including cyber-bullying (see later in the policy);
- **Emotional** - being intentionally unfriendly, social exclusion, tormenting looks or gestures,
  or
  spreading rumours.

- **Cyber** - harassing, spreading rumours or threatening via text messages, e-mail,
  social

  media or social networking sites, including fake websites and profiles or the distribution of photographs, videos or other recordings of someone doing something embarrassing or against their will.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs, and they should investigate if a child:
- begins to do poorly in school work;
- is unwilling to go to school;
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
- has possessions go missing;
- regularly feels ill in the morning;
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence;
- cries him/herself to sleep at night or has nightmares/bedwetting;
- stops eating;
- starts stammering;
- has unexplained cuts and bruises;
- attempts or threatens self-harm;
- is frightened to say what is wrong;
- is frightened of walking to or from school or changes his/her usual routine;
- may exhibit signs or engage in bullying behaviour.

All staff should be aware of these possibilities and report promptly any suspicions of bullying to the Head of Primary/Secondary.

Dealing with Bullying Incidents

Research shows that bullying is best dealt with immediately, by those who witness it. Bystanders must make it clear to the bully that such behaviour is unacceptable.

At USI, we take a zero-tolerance approach: none of us will ever encourage or turn a blind eye to any form of bullying.

Students

We expect the students at USI to be respectful to each other, treating others as they would like to be treated themselves. At the same time, they are encouraged to - and have the confidence to - speak to a member of staff if they are in distress or have been the victim of inappropriate behaviour. In the event of experiencing or witnessing bullying, USI students are expected to:
- deny the bully an audience by not accepting bullying behaviour at its source, at the first indication of the problem;
- report all bullying incidents to their Class Teacher/Form Tutor or any other member of staff (especially during break times), even when they believe that their actions have been

effective in halting the behaviour.

Staff

All staff are expected to play an active part in building a sense of community, model the type of behaviour considered acceptable and to apply the agreed standards of behaviour consistently. They should be alert to signs of bullying and racist attitudes and deal firmly with such issues. If bullying is suspected or reported, a staff member is required to:
- investigate the incident (see **Appendix 5**) and deal with it immediately;
- promptly complete the relevant information on a Bullying Incident Report Form (**Appendix 1**), and hand this to the relevant Head of Primary/Secondary.
- if a racial or other discriminatory element to the bullying is suspected, the relevant Head must be notified of this immediately.

Senior Leaders

Once a bullying incident is reported, the Head of Primary/Secondary will:
- interview all the parties involved, making a record including the full names of students and staff;
- inform the Class Teacher/Form Tutor and other staff members who teach the bullied student;
- decide, with the Class Teacher/Form Tutor, the most appropriate strategy and plan of action to combat the bullying;
- discuss, with the Principal, appropriate sanctions for the bully in accordance with the Behaviour Policy;
- inform parents of the situation, the strategy chosen to combat the bullying, the sanctions applied (if appropriate) and secure parental support for the student outside of school;
- oversee the implementation of the chosen strategy and keep the Principal and parents informed of further developments.

Sanctions

Where students do not respond to preventative strategies to combat bullying, tough action will be taken.

- At USI, intimidating or bullying others (including by electronic media [cyber-bullying]) are considered as 'serious' breaches of the Behaviour Policy, and a range of strategies and/or sanctions may be applied, determined in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and through consideration of the nature of the bullying on a case-by-case basis. The Principal will be informed, and may be consulted regarding appropriate sanctions, which may include:
  - Writing a letter of apology
  - Removal from the group (in class);
  - Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges;
  - Withdrawal of other privileges (e.g. for cyberbullying, iPad use is suspended);
  - Withholding participation in any School trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum;
  - *Individual Action Plan* or a *Weekly Report Card* monitored by the Form Tutor/Class Teacher or by the Head of Primary/Secondary;
  - *Warning* of exclusion in the event of further misbehaviour;

- *Exclusion* from lessons or from school. Exclusions include:
  - *Internal Suspension* (between 1 and 3 days, depending on severity);
  - *External Suspension* (between 1 and 3 days, depending on severity). Students and parents must meet with the Head of Primary/Secondary on the day of return, prior to the student being permitted back in class;
  - *Indefinite Suspension* is an exclusion from school for an unspecified period. This is usually used to enable further investigations into serious incidents to take place;
  - *Permanent Exclusion* (expulsion) is the ultimate sanction.

- ***As per the DoA suspension or exclusion must follow the DoA and the Regional Head of Schools must be consulted and if necessary, provide approval.***

- The Head of Primary/Secondary will contact the parents/guardian, by telephone or e-mail, to inform them of the situation and will arrange a meeting with the student, the parents, and the Form Tutor/Class Teacher (and with the SENCO/Child Protection Officer if necessary).
- The appropriate sanction will be explained at the meeting and subsequently implemented.
- Some offences, where it is the duty of the school to report incidents, may lead to police/ regulatory authorities' involvement in order to safeguard the school community.
- The school may also offer support to the student in terms of outside counselling.

Further Offences

- Any further instances of bullying will be dealt with directly by the Principal and may result in the parents being required to find alternative arrangements for the education of their child, possibly at short notice, in accordance with the school's published Terms & Conditions.
- In such cases, the Principal will inform Orbital Education and discuss options with the Regional Head of Schools.
- The Principal will notify the parents/guardians of the sanctions by letter.

Review and Appeal

- The review and appeal process for serious disciplinary matters is outlined in and governed by the Concerns & Complaints Policy.

Supporting Students

All the students concerned should be fully involved in discussions leading up to the solution and should not be left feeling isolated. The most effective resolutions may come from frank and honest group discussions that involve both the bullied and the bully, with other students of their choice in attendance and encouraged to participate, which help the students to resolve the matter themselves with support and vigilance from the staff. It must also be remembered that bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame and facing those who have bullied may further upset those who have been bullied.

Bullied Students

Staff who deal with students who have been bullied must always offer reassurance. Students who have been bullied will be given support.

Bullies

Whilst the school recognises that sanctions will have to be used against a bully, it is also recognised that support must also be given to him/her. Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies is part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the school. After the bullying issue is resolved, staff should continue to seek ways to help the student who is bullied to understand how what they do affects other people, such as praising acts of kindness or talking about what it means to be a good friend.

Bullying amongst adults

At USI School, we do not tolerate the harassment or bullying of adult members of the school community in just the same way as we do not tolerate it amongst the students.

Any cases of bullying among adult members of the school community should be reported directly to the Principal.

Reporting and Recording

Reports of bullying will be logged through a completed Bullying Incident form (see Appendix 4), and given to the relevant Head of Primary/Secondary.

Once processed by SLT, including sanctions applied, any further or follow-up actions and key points from the meetings with parents, records of bullying incidents are kept in a secure file by the Designated Senior Lead/ Child Protection Officer.

Adults who are being bullied or who believe that another person of any age is being bullied should speak in confidence to the Principal without delay.

Strategies for the Prevention of Bullying

Curricular Contribution

The school embeds the anti-social nature of bullying through its PSHE/Citizenship programme, assemblies, Form time, Student Council activities and within the curriculum as appropriate. Individual Class Teachers/Form Tutors or section heads will lead anti-bullying strategies. They are free to use Assemblies, Class/Form time, Citizenship lessons or lunch times, as appropriate, to create the time needed to address problems promptly, quickly and discreetly.

Themes and topics through these activities will include:

- **Knowledge**
    - what bullying is and what are the different types of bullying:
    - the school's Anti-Bullying Policy;
    - the harm caused by bullying and why it must be stopped.

- **Attitudes**
  - being unprejudiced;
  - being cooperative and empathetic;
  - resisting negative group pressure;
  - being self-accepting and resilient, as an antidote to discouragement.

- **Skills**
  - being assertive without acting aggressively;
  - resolving differences constructively, using conflict resolution techniques;
  - learning and using face-to-face communication skills to solve issues (rather than through messaging and social media)
  - helping others who are being bullied, as a good bystander;
  - reacting effectively if bullied.

In including these elements care must be taken to make sure that the content is age-appropriate and sufficient time is provided so that the knowledge can be assimilated, student attitudes significantly influenced, and the necessary skills developed as far as is possible.

Cyber Bullying

Victims of cyberbullying should not respond to malicious texts or e-mails. They should save the evidence and report it immediately. To further help reduce the risk of cyberbullying, individuals should always keep their passwords safe and not give out personal details online.

Involving Parents

Parents, as well as all staff and students, should know that the school will not tolerate bullying and takes a positive, proactive approach to educating pupils to combat it. Parents will be informed of the policy and procedures.

Links and Resources

There is excellent advice at http://www.bullying.co.uk/advice/bullying-policies-1#, which outlines the dangers of ill-advised remedies by well-meaning teachers and this indicates clearly that the communication of problems by victims or witnesses is central to successful minimisation of bullying in school. Other helpful websites include:

http://thebullyproject.startempathy.org/
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bullying
http://www.childline.org.uk/explore/bullying/pages/bullying.aspx
http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/problems/bullies.html#
http://www.stompoutbullying.org/
http://www.erasebullying.ca/index.php

Monitoring and Review

This policy is to be reviewed annually, though any deficiencies or weaknesses in these arrangements will be remedied without delay. This policy will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team who will forward recommendations to the Principal and Board for approval.

APPENDIX 1: Bullying Incident Report Form

Date and time of incident	
Location (if appropriate)	
Observed or reported?	
Alleged aggressor	
Alleged victim	
Witnesses	
Staff supervising at the time (if appropriate)	
Circumstances	
Nature of bullying	
Repeated or one-off?	
Immediate action taken	
Report completed by	
Staff signature	

Follow-up action

Head of Primary/Secondary	
Principal	
Preventative action points (if any)	

Date Report filed by CPO	

Additional comments, if required, should be made on the reverse of this page.

APPENDIX 2: 'Caring For Each Other' Statement

All members of the school community will contribute to a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, each other as unique individuals.

At USI School we acknowledge that every individual is unique and thus will have characteristics which are visibly different from other people and about which they may be sensitive. These *'diversities'* encompass characteristics such as age; appearance; race or nationality; cultural, social or family background; mother tongue or accent; religious beliefs; gender and sexual orientation; ability or disability.

The School admits students irrespective of their diversities if there are good prospects of meeting their needs without unduly prejudicing the education and welfare of other students.

We educate our students to appreciate and value the contributions of all members of our community and support those who are different and may be self-conscious about their differences. All members of the school community will treat others without regard to their diversities, except where common decency and consideration dictate.

Everyone should be aware of possible cultural assumptions and biases within their own attitudes. Discrimination, stereotyping and prejudice based on any diversities are indicative of low self-esteem and ignorance. They are not acceptable and will always be challenged. Racist or otherwise offensive symbols, badges and insignia on clothing and equipment are forbidden.

All students have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school. Teaching and other groups are co-educational unless there are specific reasons otherwise and the curriculum will encourage students to question assumptions and stereotypes regarding diversities.

To ensure equality of access for those whose mother tongue is not English, members of the community need to be constantly aware of their usage of English – its form, content and tone. Students' names will be accurately recorded and correctly pronounced. Students will be encouraged to accept and respect names from other cultures.

Teachers will identify and provide strategies for students who would benefit from Learning Support to enhance their chance of success and provide.

In all staff appointments, promotions and training, we aim to select the most suitable candidate, based on purely professional criteria and irrespective of their diversities. We want to provide positive role models for our students. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that these expectations are observed and embedded. Any member of the community who considers that there has been a breach of these expectations should inform the Principal, who will investigate the matter and take appropriate action in accordance with the school's policies.

APPENDIX 3: Measures to prevent Violence, Bullying, Harassment and Psychosocial Risks amongst staff

Harassment or violence towards any colleague is unacceptable.

To ensure personal dignity and security and to prevent violence, bullying, harassment or other psychosocial risks amongst the staff, the leadership of the USI aims to:

- foster a positive working atmosphere which enables job satisfaction and a high-quality working life;
- promote a collaborative culture based on mutual trust, respect and teamwork, protecting the dignity and integrity of all individuals;
- encourage open and constant communication between colleagues and between colleagues and school leaders.

This is achieved through:

- the effective organisation of the school:
  - developing consistent operating procedures to eliminate confusion and conflicting directions;
  - making clear job descriptions, expectations and required tasks;
  - keeping staff informed about organisational goals;
  - enabling staff to participate in decision-making processes;
  - providing access to worthwhile professional development opportunities;
  - promptly resolving any staffing issues and concerns;

- continually improving our leadership:
  - increasing the role and responsibilities of senior staff in resolving conflicts;
  - educating senior staff about contemporary models of leadership that include the avoidance of violence, bullying, harassment and psychosocial risks;
  - maintaining a clear awareness of events and trends in society, including determining norms and values and the consequences of violation of these;

- raising awareness of violence, bullying, harassment and psychosocial risk:
  - equipping staff to recognise signs of such conduct;
  - conducting, when appropriate, surveys of the perception of violence, bullying, harassment or psychosocial risks happening in the school;
  - carrying out, when appropriate, campaigns in the broader community which promote the prevention of violence, bullying, harassment and psychosocial risks;

- protecting and providing support and assistance to victims of violence, bullying, harassment or psychosocial harm:
  - preventing further actions against them;
  - taking care to restore their self-esteem reputation and self-esteem;
  - utilising external expertise if needed to resolve the consequences of violence, bullying, harassment or psychosocial risk;

- appropriately sanctioning any perpetrator (according to the Staff Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy), up to and including termination of employment.

All USI staff are familiar with these measures to prevent violence, bullying, harassment and

psychosocial risks and are able to implement them.

APPENDIX 4: Measures to Prevent Threats and Violence by Third Parties

Violence, or the threat of violence, towards any member of BISL staff, students or members of the USI community is unacceptable.

In the event of any risk or act of violence or bullying, the following steps should be taken:

1. **PLEASE STOP**: in the event of **violence (real, threatened or perceived)** by a third party, the staff member will ask the aggressor to stop the unacceptable behaviour.

2. **NOTIFY SLT**: if the unacceptable **behaviour continues**, the staff member will notify a member of the SLT or another competent person;

3. **CALL FOR HELP**: if **serious violence** is threatened or is likely, the staff member should leave the immediate area and call for support (from a colleague, the SLT or the police);

   if the staff member is not able to leave their working space (e.g. they are supervising – and potentially protecting – children), he/she will not oppose the aggressor. He/she will comply with the aggressor's demands but contact the SLT or the police* as soon as possible;

   [* *To avoid confusion, staff should only call the police directly if they are alone and cannot contact the SLT. In other cases, the SLT will be responsible for calling for any police support.*]

   Our working spaces are arranged in a way that would enable the police a fast and effective intervention, if necessary.

4. **DEFEND**: in the event of a **physical assault**, the staff member should fight back to defend themselves and protect the children in their care, using their knowledge of self-defence in the best way they can.

All USI staff are familiar with these measures to prevent or address threats and violence by third parties and are able to implement them.

APPENDIX 5: Strategies for Investigating Bullying

Get the Facts
- Keep all the involved individuals separate.
- Get the story from several sources, both adults and students.
- Listen without blaming.
- Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
- It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple students are involved or the bullying involves social bullying or cyberbullying. Collect all available information.

Determine if it *is* Bullying
There are many behaviours that look like bullying but require different approaches, so it is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else. To determine if it is bullying, consider the following questions:
- What is the history between the individuals involved?
  - have there been previous conflicts?
- Is there a power imbalance?
  - a power imbalance may not be easily recognized, especially as 'power' is not limited to physical strength. If the victim feels there is a power imbalance, there probably is.
- Has this happened before?
  - is the victim worried it will happen again?
- Have the individuals been in a relationship/dated?
  - there are special responses for teen dating violence.
- It may not matter "who started it."
  - some individuals who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behaviour.

Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support the individuals involved.

Talking to victims of bullying
- Know that individuals who are bullied may struggle with talking about it.
- Listen and focus on the victim.
  - Learn what's been going on and show you want to help.
- Assure the victim that bullying is not their fault.
- Give advice about what to do.
  - With children, this may involve role-playing and thinking through how the child might react if the bullying occurred again.
- Consider referring them to a professional counsellor, psychologist, or other mental health services.

- Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied victim. The individual, parents, and school or organization may all have valuable input.

It may also help to:
- Ask a student being bullied what can be done to make him/her feel safe. Changes to routine should be minimised – s/he is not at fault and should not be singled out. Instead, consider rearranging classroom seating plans for everyone. However, if bigger moves are necessary, such as switching classrooms, the child who is bullied should not be forced to change.
- Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between schools, organisations and parents. Discuss the steps that are taken and the limitations around what can be done based on policies and laws. Remember, the law does not allow school personnel to discuss discipline, consequences, or services given to other children.
- Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the victim of bullying.

Avoid these mistakes
- Never tell a student to ignore the bullying.
- Do not blame a student for being bullied. Even if s/he has provoked the bullying, no one deserves to be bullied.
- Do not tell a student to physically fight back against the person who is bullying. It could get him/her hurt or face behavioural sanctions themselves.
- Parents should not contact or attempt to contact another parent or child that is involved in a bullying incident with your child. All contact will only happen under School supervision and no direct contact regarding a bullying incident can take place directly under any circumstance. The school or other officials should act as mediators between parents.

Follow-up
Address Bullying Behaviour. School staff, parents and other students all have a role to play.

Show students that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the students that bullying will not be tolerated and model respectful behaviour when addressing the problem.

Make sure all students understand what the behaviour problem is. Young people who bully must learn that their behaviour is wrong and harms others.

Show a commitment to making bullying stop. Because bullying is behaviour that repeats or has the potential to be repeated, it takes consistent effort to ensure that it stops.

Work with the perpetrator to understand some of the reasons he or she was bullied. For example:
- Sometimes children bully to fit in. These students may benefit from participating in positive activities. Involvement in sports and clubs can enable them to take leadership roles and make friends without feeling the need to bully.
- Sometimes children bully because something else - issues at home, abuse, stress - is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied themselves. These students may need additional support, such as mental health services.

Use consequences to teach. Consequences that involve learning or building empathy can help prevent future bullying by helping bullies see how their actions affect others. The school's Behaviour Policy must be followed when developing consequences and assigning discipline, but a student who bullied could:

- write a letter apologizing to the student who was bullied;
- lead a class discussion about how to be a good friend;
- write a story about the effects of bullying or the benefits of teamwork;
- role-play a scenario or make a presentation about the importance of respecting others, the negative effects of gossip, or how to co-operate;
- do a project about civil rights and bullying;
- read a book about bullying;
- make posters for the school about cyberbullying and being smart online.

Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. For example, the child can:
- do a good deed for the person who was bullied or for others in the community.

Support those who witness bullying

Even if students are not actually being bullied or bullying others, they can be affected by bullying. Many times, if they see bullying they may not know what to do to stop it. They may not feel safe stepping in at the moment, but there are many other steps they can take. The most important is to report the bullying.

APPENDIX 6: Research into Bullying

There is currently no legal definition of bullying - the intentional tormenting of others through verbal harassment, physical assault, or other subtler methods of coercion such as manipulation. In colloquial speech, bullying often describes a form of harassment perpetrated by an abuser who possesses more physical and/or social power and dominance than the victim. The victim of bullying is sometimes referred to as a target. The harassment can be verbal, physical and/or emotional.

Norwegian researcher Dan Owelus defines bullying as when a person is "exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons." He defines negative action as "when a person intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort upon another person, through physical contact, through words or in other ways."

Bullying can be categorised as direct or indirect and as physical, emotional, verbal or gestural.

Bullying can occur in any setting where human beings interact with each other. This includes school, the workplace, home and neighbourhoods. Bullying can exist between social groups, social classes and even between countries (Wikipedia, 24 August 2007).

Research has shown that:
- bullying has been reported as occurring in every school and kindergarten or day-care environment in which it has been investigated.

- gender differences have been found, indicating that:
    - boys are bullied physically more often than girls;
    - girls are more often involved in indirect forms of aggression, such as excluding others, rumour spreading and unpleasant manipulating of situations to hurt those they do not like.

- age differences have been found, indicating that:
    - bullying among younger children is proportionately more physical;
    - with older children, indirect and more subtle forms of bullying tend to occur more often.
  Despite these differences in the kinds of bullying most experienced by different age groups, children typically report being bullied less often as they get older, although being victimised tends to increase when children enter Secondary school.

- being bullied at school typically has negative effects on the physical and psychological well-being of those children who are frequently and severely targeted.

- most bullying takes place when bystanders are present and most bystanders do not act to discourage it. However, when a bystander does intervene, there is a significant possibility (around 50%) that the bullying will stop.

- Teachers generally do not have the opportunity to take any action because they are typically not present when bullying takes place and are not told about it.

- a large proportion of students would like to see bullying stopped.

- although there is no consistent evidence that bullying overall is increasing, one area of growing concern among children is cyberbullying, especially among older students.
  Cyberbullying is the most rapidly expanding kind of abusive behaviour among school children. A great deal of it is conducted outside the school, although it often involves children who attend the same school.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is to be reviewed annually, though any deficiencies or weaknesses in Accident Reporting arrangements will be remedied without delay.

This policy will be reviewed by The Executive Principal.

This policy will be approved by The Executive Principal.

Date when the policy was last approved: **September 2024**

Date when the next review is due: **September 2025**