LEARNERS TODAY, LEADERS TOMORROW

Canadian International School Anti-Bullying and Healthy Relationships Policy

Revised: June 19th 2025

Purpose of the Anti-Bullying and Healthy Relationships Policy

Everyone at Canadian International School (CIS), has a right to learn, be respected, and feel safe.

Students, parents and staff form a community within our school. As a school community we are committed to providing a welcoming, caring, and safe environment for all our students so they can learn in a supportive and secure atmosphere. We are all responsible for maintaining a welcoming and caring environment which seeks to develop respectful and healthy relationships. When behaviours are not in line with our commitment to a caring environment, all students should feel safe to speak to an adult. To promote feelings of safety and inclusion in our school, all incidents of behaviours inconsistent with school expectations will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

CIS also embraces the advantages of modern technology in terms of the educational benefits it brings. With the continued advancement of technology, new and unexpected behaviours have emerged online. The school strives to teach appropriate ways to interact while online and is mindful that adverse behaviours can occur. Our expectations for appropriate behaviours also extend to online activities. It is important that we are responsive to what happens in our online communities, to ensure learning environments are safe and welcoming places for all, free of stigmatization. We are all responsible for and play a role in the maintenance and promotion of well-being for all members of our school community.

Policy Statement

At CIS, bullying in any form will not be tolerated. Bullying is defined as intentional, repeated harmful behavior that targets an individual, whether physically, verbally, emotionally, or online. This includes, but not limited to, actions such as physical assault, spreading rumors, and cyberbullying.

It is important to note that bullying is not classified as a "one-off" incident. For an act to be considered bullying, it must occur over a prolonged period, which may span days, weeks, or even months. Isolated incidents of aggressive behavior, while serious, do not meet the criteria for bullying unless they are part of a sustained course of conduct (Rigby, 2002).

For an action to classify as bullying, the following conditions need to be met:

- Intent to hurt, harm, or put someone under stress
- The presence of a power imbalance – targeted individual is unable to defend themselves
- The action is repeated over time
- The action is considered unfair – as determined by the anti-bullying committee

We adopt a zero-tolerance approach and ensure all bullying incidents are handled through restorative practices to help both the target and aggressor understand the impact of their actions.

Support will be provided for both parties, and parents will be involved in all cases. Any student found to engage in bullying will face appropriate sanctions in line with the severity of the incident, as outlined in the Student Behavior Policy (CIS 2025) and in accordance with ADEK guidelines.

Goals:

The anti-bullying school policy is designed to set clear rules and boundaries to address any concerns of bullying within the school community. The policy aims to provide a consistent understanding and response across the school environment to any bullying incidents that might occur. This details the procedure that needs to be followed and how to report and record bullying instances.

The school mandates adherence to the anti-bullying policy, clearly demonstrating its zero tolerance for bullying. Ongoing awareness campaigns, staff and parent trainings, and student-led committees support prevention efforts. Anti-bullying education is integrated into lessons, assemblies, cultural activities, and stories to promote a safe and respectful school environment.

To help understand bullying, the policy is made to cover all types and forms including:

Classification of Bullying	Definition
Emotional	Exclusion, unkind/unfriendly behaviors
Verbal	Swearing, name calling, verbal insults, unfair criticism, spreading rumors, sarcasm or teasing
Physical	Striking, kicking, inappropriate use of hands, throwing objects, any form of violence, removing or hiding belongings of others, coercion to assault
Discriminatory and prejudice-based	Racial, gendered, faith-based or ability-based abuse or taunting
Gestural	Use of obscene or threatening gestures, menacing stares, aversion or deliberate ignoring
Relational	Forming coalitions against an individual or persuasion of other to exclude someone
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display or sharing of sexual material, use of inappropriate gestures, unwanted physical attention or comments
Cyber-bullying	Any form of online/electronic bullying – social networking/gaming websites, social/messaging applications

Addressing Bullying in Schools: Training Manual –UNICEF (2019)

With the increase of technology and online platforms, it is important for students, parents, and school to be aware of cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by an individual or group using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time (Smith et al., 2008). Cyber-bullying can include, but is not limited to:
- Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones
- Sending inappropriate email messages to others
- The use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear, or humiliation
- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, including but not limited to blogs, personal websites, and/or social networking sites
- Hijacking/cloning/making fake e-mail/social media accounts
- Making threatening, abusive, defamatory, or humiliating remarks on social media platforms (i.e., Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter/X, WhatsApp, TikTok, etc.).

School Practice and Procedure: Anti-Bullying Policy

At CIS, we are committed to fostering a safe and inclusive environment by promoting awareness and reinforcing an anti-bullying culture. This policy is outlined in both the Parent-Student Handbook and CIS Student Behavior Policy (2025), providing clear definitions, support structures, and the consequences of bullying. Information on safe use of technology is also provided in the School Technology Policy.

Reporting Bullying Incidents

Any concerning behavior or incident may be reported by a student, parent, caregiver, friend, or any individual aware of the situation. Staff members who witness or are informed of a concern are required to report it to a teacher or school administrator. Disciplinary actions will align with the CIS Student Behavior Policy (2025).

Identifying Bullying Behavior

Students may not always speak up about being bullied due to fear, embarrassment, or concern about social repercussions. Children who exhibit bullying behavior may struggle with forming positive relationships and can require support in developing healthy interactions (StopBullying.gov, n.d.).

Possible warning signs of bullying may include:

- Reluctance or refusal to attend school, or frequent complaints of illness
- Avoidance of school through absenteeism or beginning to bully others
- Social withdrawal, low mood, or increased screen time
- Decline in academic engagement or performance
- Loss or destruction of personal belongings
- Unexplained injuries such as bruises or cuts

Bullying can have significant and lasting effects, including physical symptoms, emotional distress, social isolation, and academic difficulties. Chronic exposure to bullying may lead to toxic stress, which can affect brain development and lead to behavioral or emotional challenges. Furthermore, a school climate affected by bullying fosters fear and reduces overall student well-being and learning potential.

Bullying is a learned behavior (Rigby, 2019) and is not a normal or acceptable part of growing up. Without intervention, such behavior tends to persist or worsen over time. The nature of bullying can evolve with age and may vary across genders.

Response Protocol and School Strategy

At CIS, we maintain a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying. Our response follows a progressive intervention model involving multiple levels of support. Please refer to Appendix 1 for a visual representation of the reporting protocol at CIS.

Teachers, Educational Assistants, and Support Staff

Any suspected or reported bullying incident must be addressed immediately. All staff, including teachers, educational assistants, bus monitors, cleaners, and other support personnel, must report concerns directly to a member of the Child Protection Team (CPT), specifically a school counsellor or a member of school administration (Head of schools). A CPT member will assess the situation, initiate appropriate follow-up, and document the incident for future reference and monitoring.

Staff are expected to handle all cases urgently and confidentially.

Child Protection Team (CPT)

The CPT—comprising school counsellors, the Head of Inclusion, and Heads of Schools, will formally investigate reported incidents and take necessary action. Support is provided for both the target and the aggressor through strategies such as:

- Positive behavior reinforcement
- Restorative practices
- Mediation
- Home-school communication
- School conferences

Consequences for confirmed incidents are outlined in the CIS Student Behavior Policy (2025) and follow ADEK regulations. In severe cases, external authorities may be involved.

Students

Students are regularly educated on bullying and the importance of reporting any incidents to a trusted adult. Information is accessible through:

- The Student Behavior Policy and Parent-Student Handbook
- Informational posters throughout the school
- School Counsellor information sessions

Counsellors are readily available, and a supportive school environment ensures students feel safe and heard.

It is the student's responsibility to follow student behavior expectations and report any concerns.

Parents

The school's anti-bullying policies are clearly communicated in the Parent-Student Handbook and reinforced through reminders via the Parent WAG (Week at a Glance).

To effectively support students, parents are encouraged to report any concerns promptly. Following an investigation, the CPT maintains communication with parents to ensure continued support. It is the responsibility of parents to reinforce the school's behavioral expectations and to help foster a respectful and safe environment for all.

School-Wide Anti-Bullying Initiatives

Staff are introduced to anti-bullying protocols during orientation and receive ongoing training throughout the year via different opportunities such as:

- Professional development sessions
- Staff meetings
- Focused discussions

Teachers also incorporate lessons and conversations into the curriculum that promote empathy, respect, and healthy peer relationships.

Key annual initiatives include:

- Pink Shirt Day – Anti-Bullying Day
- Orange Shirt Day – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- Inclusion and Diversity Month
- Cyber Safety Awareness Campaigns - led by counsellors via classroom sessions and parent workshops
- Digital Footprint and Online Behavior (Online Safety) - Student & parent presentations led by school counsellors on online safety and ethics following the guidelines of the U.A.E. Digital Wellbeing Council
- Division-Focused Assemblies promoting kindness, inclusion, and the values of the late Sheikh Zayed

Students are empowered to contribute to a culture of respect through various student-led initiatives:

- Student Voice Activities: Student leaders organize awareness projects, school displays, and morning announcements.
- Student-Led Contests: Creative contests, such as designing a shirt that represents kindness and unity in line with UAE values.
- Mentorship Opportunities: Older students engage in positive coaching, modeling good behavior and sportsmanship for younger peers.

Conclusion

At CIS, we recognize that maintaining a positive school climate is a shared responsibility. Through clear policies, proactive interventions, and strong collaboration between staff, students, and parents, we aim to eliminate bullying and ensure a safe, inclusive learning environment for all.

Reference Documents and Citations

At the time of writing, the policy is linked to other school and ADEK policies, practices and action plans including:

CIS Student Behavior Policy
CIS Parent-Student Handbook
CIS School Technology Policy
CIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
ADEK School Safeguarding Policy
ADEK Student Mental Health Policy
ADEK Student Protection Policy
ADEK Wellbeing Policy
ADEK Inclusion Policy

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Appendix 1
Anti-Bullying Flow Chart (Student friendly)

I am being bullied

I suspect someone else is being bullied

Tell a trusted adult. This can be:
* A teacher or other staff member
* School counsellors
* A member from administration
* Your parents

What will happen?
- The information will immediately be transferred to a member of the Anti-Bullying Committee at school
- An investigation will take place to gather information and details
- The involved members will be provided with the appropriate support – ensuring there is no risk of immediate harm
- Appropriate action will be taken based on the incident following investigation
- Parents may be involved
- An undertaking may be required to ensure the behavior is not repeated
- If the behavior is repeated, more serious action can be taken according to the guidelines outlined in the Student Behavior Policy