

Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures

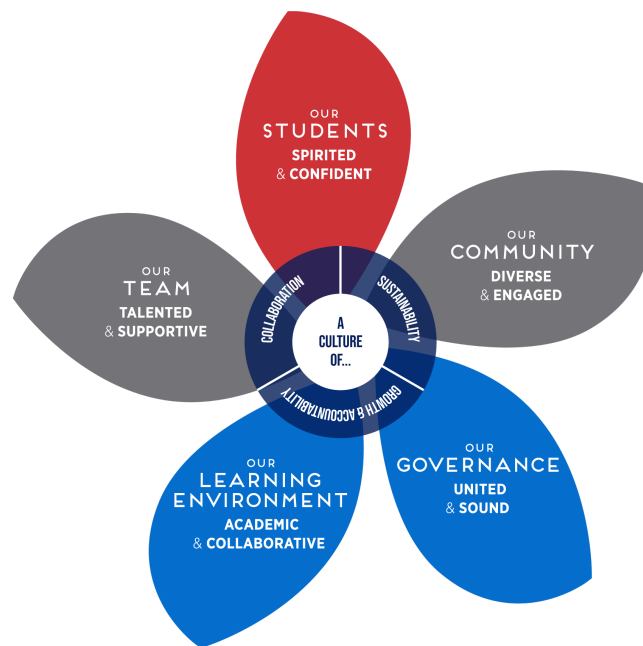
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Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures

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This policy and its associated procedures have been guided by the FIS strategic plan Vision and mission.



AXIS 1 OUR STUDENTS - SPIRITED AND CONFIDENT 

“All students deserve to be happy and well”

AXIS 3 OUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT - ACADEMIC AND COLLABORATIVE 

“Ensure a safe and healthy learning environment by strengthening the school’s Child Protection framework and practices.”

“Attend to school’s identity by further strengthening cross-stream, cross-division, and cross-campus collaboration and opportunities: **One FIS**”

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1. Introduction

At French International School (FIS), we are a multicultural school offering diverse curricula built upon values of global-mindedness, critical thinking and personal development.

Our mission is to energise young minds, prepare independent and compassionate life-long learners and inspire our students to achieve their full potential. We reach our goals by providing a collaborative and stimulating bilingual learning environment where all community members are valued and respected.

In order to enable effective teaching and learning to take place, positive engagement and behaviour in all aspects of school life is necessary. Our school community works to create and maintain a welcoming, calm, supportive and safe learning environment in which every person is valued.

We aim to promote a positive attitude in our students, creating an environment in which good behaviour is expected within a climate of trust. We see this as **a three-way partnership with students, parents, and staff members who all take responsibility for their actions.**

The FIS is a school with a strong moral ethos. School rules are for the safety and comfort of all members of the school community. **Any form of bullying, as defined in point 3 below, will not be tolerated.**

Everyone will be vigilant and will intervene promptly if there are any signs or reports of bullying. All staff will work to ensure that bullying is not prevalent in the school community by implementing preventative strategies involving staff, parents and children and also the wider school community.

The aim of this document is to ensure a unified approach is practised across our school when dealing with bullying and also to ensure consistency across all key phases with a wider purpose to enable children to thrive and strive in a positive and safe learning environment.

2. Anti-bullying Policy purpose:

An anti-bullying policy serves a crucial purpose in establishing a safe and inclusive environment for all individuals. By defining bullying, providing guidance on recognising signs, and outlining procedures for reporting and addressing incidents, the policy aims to protect individuals from harm and promote a positive learning or working atmosphere. It emphasises ethical behaviour, fosters inclusivity and diversity, and educates community members about the impact of bullying. Ultimately, the policy acts as a framework for intervention, ensuring that bullying is swiftly addressed and prevented and that all stakeholders can participate fully and feel valued within the community.

3. Definition of bullying:

According to the Ministry of Education in France (Education Nationale), bullying in the school setting refers **to the repetitive negative or even violent comments and actions directed towards a fellow student by an individual or a group of students.** The consequences of bullying are detrimental, as they erode an individual's sense of dignity and give rise to an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, and offensive atmosphere. Moreover, with the advancements in technology

and the prevalence of social networks, bullying extends beyond the school premises and adversely impacts young individuals through cyberbullying.

Hong Kong Education Bureau explains that academics have slightly different views on the definition of bullying, but most of them agree that it has three components in common, namely:

- **Repetition** - Bullying repeats over time. It is not a single incident.
- **Malicious intent** - Bullies oppress and hurt others deliberately.
- **Imbalance of power** - Bullies are apparently more powerful, and bullying occurs when the victims are unable to defend themselves.

A behaviour is defined as bullying only when it has all these three components. Overall, bullying is a repeated and intended act of harm or oppression by a person or a group of persons who are more powerful or in the majority.

At FIS, our students have written and selected the following words to express their vision of bullying:

Kindergarten and Primary students: *"Bullying is the repeated intimidation of a person. This violence can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can take place on school premises, or outside school during activities or on the Internet (cyberbullying). It's important to tell an adult if you witness or experience this type of behaviour."*

Secondary students: *"Bullying is a repetitive verbal, physical or online act of discrimination by an individual or group of individuals against a victim due to differences (religion, appearance, disability, beliefs) with the aim of putting them down. The consequences can include sadness, loss of confidence, failure at school, depression, mutilation and, at worst, suicide"*

4. Types and Forms of Bullying:

We recognise that there are levels of bullying. It can take many forms, but the main types are:

- **Physical bullying** with aggressive behaviour - Punching, kicking, slapping, hitting, shoving, tripping, pulling hair, extorting money or properties, etc.
- **Verbal bullying** - Intimidating, making nasty/abusive calls, cursing, defaming, mockery, name-calling and insulting or making malicious fun of somebody by attacking his personal characteristics like appearance, ability, sexual inclination and ethnicity
- **Cyber-bullying** -Cyber-bullying refers to the act of using electronic means, such as the internet, social media platforms, emails, chat rooms, and text messages, to harass, intimidate, or harm others. With the rapid advancement of information technology, cyber-bullying has become a significant concern in today's digital age. It allows bullies to target individuals and spread rumours, post insulting remarks, share embarrassing photos or videos, and engage in other forms of personal attacks.

The impact of cyber-bullying can be devastating for the victims. They may experience emotional distress, anxiety, depression, and a decline in academic performance. Unlike traditional bullying, cyber-bullying can reach victims anytime and anywhere, making it difficult for them to escape or find refuge. The anonymity provided by the online environment often emboldens bullies, as they can hide

behind screens and aliases, making it challenging to identify and hold them accountable for their actions. Various forms of cyberbullying exist, including:

- **Harassment:** Repeatedly sending offensive, threatening, or intimidating messages to the victim.
- **Impersonation:** Creating fake profiles or impersonating someone else to spread false information or engage in harmful behaviour.
- **Exclusion:** Deliberately excluding someone from online groups, social circles, or activities to isolate and ostracise them.
- **Cyberstalking:** Constantly monitoring and tracking someone's online activities, invading their privacy, and causing fear or distress.
- **Public humiliation:** Sharing embarrassing photos, videos, or personal information about the victim with the intention of causing humiliation and shame.
- **Denigration:** Posting derogatory comments, rumours, or lies about the victim to damage their reputation and social standing.
- **Indirect bullying** - Spreading rumours, being hostile, ignoring, isolating, boycotting or rejecting the victim, etc.

5. Signs of Bullying:

There is no definitive way of identifying that a person is being bullied. Adults should, therefore, be vigilant in order to identify any of these physical and/or behavioural changes in a person as soon as possible.

The potential signs that may point to a bullying problem are:

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewellery
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem
- Self-destructive behaviours such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

Please be aware that not all children who are bullied exhibit warning signs.

Signs a Child is Bullying Others:

- Get into physical or verbal fights
- Have friends who bully others
- Are increasingly aggressive
- Get sent to the principal's office or to detention frequently

- Have unexplained extra money or new belongings
- Blame others for their problems
- Don't accept responsibility for their actions
- Are competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity

6. Preventing bullying (a collaborative effort involving parents, schools, and the community)

6.1. FIS anti-bullying strategies:

FIS's strategic plan exemplifies its commitment to fostering a secure and inclusive atmosphere for every student, effectively mirroring the school's culture. We ensure that in all aspects of school life, there is an emphasis on the importance of relationships, emotional well-being, and community ethos.

To prevent bullying behaviour, our school have in place in both streams various strategies:

- **Cultivating Positive Relationships:** Building positive connections among students and between staff and students is a central focus of our strategic plan. This emphasis on fostering healthy relationships promotes a sense of belonging, respect, and empathy within our school community. We have a bilingual FIS Primary code of conduct across all three campuses that emphasises the following values: **respect, cooperation, self-evaluation, engagement, and organisation**. At secondary school, students must follow the internal student rules and conduct guidelines.
- **Encouraging Seeking Help:** Actively encouraging students to seek assistance when facing difficulties and providing them with sufficient time and privacy to express their concerns is a key element of our strategic plan. By creating a supportive environment, we ensure that students feel comfortable reaching out for help when needed.
- **Promoting Collaborative Learning:** Our strategic plan places a strong emphasis on collaboration with students to enhance their understanding of the consequences of their actions. By involving students in the learning process and encouraging them to reflect on their behaviour, we foster a sense of responsibility and promote positive decision-making.
- **Staff Training and Awareness:** Ensuring that all staff members working with students receive appropriate training and possess a comprehensive understanding of the school's approach to behaviour management and addressing bullying is a fundamental aspect of our strategic plan. This commitment to professional development equips our staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to address and prevent bullying incidents effectively.
- **Continuous Behavior Monitoring:** Ongoing monitoring of behaviour during lessons, breaks, and lunchtime. This proactive approach enables us to promptly identify and address any instances of peer abuse or problematic behaviour, creating a safe and respectful learning environment for all.
- **The Curriculum:** Each school year PSHE, PES will tackle, in an age-appropriate way, issues which are set out in Keeping a Students Safe in Education. PSHE /PES Workshops offer a wide range of valuable content with the goal of helping students comprehend the

concept of bullying and effectively address it while also fostering problem-solving skills and developing their psychosocial competencies.

- **Communication:** We, as a school, are aware of the need for open communication between stakeholders. All sections of the school organisation must understand its role and responsibilities. We understand the need to ensure this policy is a living document known and understood by all. Parents/carers are made aware of the school's policy at the induction meeting and through documentation, including this Policy that is available on the website. Regular bulletins about what bullying is, how to communicate with staff, and recognising early intervention is crucial. Parents know that the school acts to prevent bullying and not just deal with bullying incidents. The views of parents, carers and other stakeholders are regularly recorded and taken into consideration in the rollout of school strategies. Children and families who are new to the school are reassured that bullying is not permitted, and it is a warning to potential bullies that such behaviour is unacceptable from the outset.
- **Staff and parents Code of Conduct:** We recognise that all adults in the school are in effect role models for the students. The way in which we behave towards each other and to students is particularly important in terms of providing positive role models. Our code of conduct emphasises the following values: **respect, cooperation, self-evaluation, engagement, and organisation.**

These strategies also extend to the prevention of cyber-bullying, recognising the importance of addressing online bullying and promoting a safe digital environment. Our school prioritises the education of students in digital citizenship, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to navigate the online world responsibly. Through dedicated programs and integration into the curriculum, students learn about the ethical use of technology, online etiquette, and the potential consequences of cyberbullying.

6.2. Parents' crucial role in Bullying Prevention:

By taking an active role in children's lives and promoting a culture of respect and kindness, parents can help create a safe and supportive environment. The following actions and strategies are encouraged:

- **Open communication:** Parents should establish open lines of communication with their children. Encourage your child to talk about their experiences, including any bullying incidents. Create a supportive and non-judgmental environment where they feel safe to share their concerns.
- **Recognise signs of bullying:** Parents should be vigilant, watch for signs of bullying and address the issue promptly.
- **Educate and empower:** Teach children about bullying, its different forms, and its impact. Help them understand that bullying is never acceptable and they have the right to be treated with respect. Provide them with strategies to respond assertively to bullying, such as walking away, seeking help from an adult, or using confident body language.
- **Set a positive example:** Children learn from their parent's behaviour: model kindness, empathy, and respectful communication in your interactions with others. Demonstrate the

importance of resolving conflicts peacefully and treating others with dignity and compassion.

- **Establish clear expectations and rules:** Set clear expectations regarding behaviour, both online and offline. Discuss the importance of treating others with kindness and respect. Establish rules regarding technology and social media use, and monitor your child's online activities to ensure their safety.
- **Foster resilience:** Help your child develop resilience and self-confidence. Encourage them to participate in activities they enjoy and excel in, which can boost their self-esteem. Teach them coping strategies to deal with bullying, such as assertive communication, seeking support from trusted adults, and practising self-care.
- **Work with the school:** Establish a partnership with the school to address bullying effectively. Attend parent-teacher meetings, participate in workshops or seminars on bullying prevention, and become familiar with the school's policies and procedures.
- **Monitor online activities:** Be aware of your child's online presence and monitor their online activities. Encourage responsible internet use and discuss the potential risks of cyberbullying. Teach your child about online privacy, the importance of not sharing personal information, and the necessity of reporting any bullying or inappropriate behaviour they encounter online.

It is also of utmost importance for parents to give serious consideration to the advice provided by relevant authorities. Such, the recommendations laid out in the [April 2024 report to the French government](#) offer valuable guidance. These recommendations aim to promote the well-being and healthy development of children in the digital age. One crucial recommendation is to restrict cell phone usage for children under the age of 11.

Additionally, the report advises against providing children under the age of 13 with cell phones that have internet access. This is a significant measure to protect young children from potential online risks, such as exposure to inappropriate content or cyberbullying.

Moreover, the report emphasises that access to social media should be delayed until the age of 15. This recommendation acknowledges the potential negative effects of early exposure to social media platforms and highlights the importance of promoting ethical social media usage among teenagers.

In tandem with these recommendations, parents are encouraged to be mindful of the terms and conditions of the applications installed on their children's phones. Many apps have age restrictions and guidelines in place to limit access based on age appropriateness. It is crucial for parents to familiarise themselves with these restrictions and ensure that their children are using apps suitable for their age group.

For further advice on helping the child to deal with bullying:

- The Bullying UK website: www.bullying.co.uk
- The French Education website: [Bullying prevention at school](#)
- The HK EDB website: [Preventing Bullying](#)

7. Reporting bullying or any suspicion of bullying:

We encourage all individuals within the school community, especially our students, to promptly notify a trusted adult within the school if they witness any instances of bullying. Our goal is to create a supportive environment where both students and parents feel comfortable discussing any concerns with staff, with the assurance that they will be listened to and supported.

Furthermore, we want to emphasise our commitment to ensuring that students will not be put at risk or encounter any negative repercussions for reporting suspected incidents of bullying. The school staff will take immediate action by informing the designated safety leaders for the campus and stream, referred to as DSL, in order to address the situation promptly.

If individuals have any questions or concerns regarding the appropriate course of action, they can contact the Head of the FIS Health Department. This individual serves as a reliable contact point and can be contacted anytime by anyone in need. To reach the Head of the Health Department, please email head_healthdepartment@g.lfis.edu.hk

If parents feel that their concerns have not been adequately addressed, we encourage them to contact the principal of their child's school. The principal plays a crucial role in overseeing the school's overall functioning and ensuring all students' well-being. They are available to listen to parents' concerns, provide further clarification, and work towards resolving any issues that may arise. Open and effective communication between parents and the principal is essential in fostering a collaborative and supportive school environment. Parents can reach out to the principal through the school's designated communication channels, such as email or scheduled meetings, to discuss their concerns and seek a resolution.

8. Procedures for Dealing with Reported Bullying or potential bullying:

Our school is dedicated to fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all students, which includes effectively addressing bullying incidents. We have implemented a proactive approach that prioritises education and non-punitive strategies to achieve this.

Extensive research has shown that a non-punitive approach effectively addresses bullying behaviour. Instead of solely focusing on punishment, our approach emphasises education and understanding the underlying issues contributing to bullying. This allows us to address both the immediate behaviour and the root causes, leading to long-term positive change.

One significant advantage of our non-punitive approach is its ability to prevent retaliatory actions. Traditional punitive measures often result in a cycle of aggression and retaliation, perpetuating a negative environment. In contrast, our approach promotes open communication, empathy, and understanding, breaking the cycle and empowering individuals to make positive choices.

Through education, we equip students with the necessary tools and skills to navigate conflicts, manage emotions, and develop empathy. By promoting emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and positive communication skills, we foster a culture of respect, empathy, and inclusivity, thereby preventing incidents of bullying.

Furthermore, we recognise that individuals who engage in bullying behaviour may be facing personal challenges or difficult circumstances. By offering support and understanding, we address the root causes of their behaviour and provide opportunities for growth and change.

Our approach is rooted in empathy and compassion, inspired by the Pikas approach, a restorative Justice method. When addressing reported bullying incidents, we follow a structured intervention process:

1. **Identification of Concerns:** Teachers, staff, or students who become aware of potential bullying incidents, including cyberbullying, report their concerns to designated safety leaders [DSL].
2. **Information Gathering:** The DSL conducts interviews with relevant individuals involved in the incident, such as the victim, the alleged bully, and any witnesses. This step helps us gain a comprehensive understanding of the circumstances and dynamics surrounding the incident.
3. **Individual Interviews:** Separate interviews are conducted with the victim and the alleged bully, giving them an opportunity to express their perspectives, emotions, and concerns. In some cases, a joint meeting may be arranged to facilitate open dialogue, empathy, and understanding.
4. **Follow-Up:** The DSL ensures that the agreed-upon solutions are implemented and monitors progress. Follow-up meetings may be scheduled to assess the effectiveness of the interventions and provide ongoing support.

In addition to the DSL's role in ensuring the implementation of solutions and monitoring progress, the school counsellors and school psychologist will play a crucial role in providing follow-up support. They will work closely with both parents and students who require additional assistance and guidance.

By embracing an educational and non-accusatory approach, our school prioritises open communication, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving, creating a positive and inclusive environment for all students.

Disciplinary measures are considered only in cases of substantiated bullying involving repeated intentional harm or oppression by individuals with greater power. Sanctions provide an opportunity for the student to understand the severity of their actions, reflect, develop empathy, and grasp the impact of their choices.

Sanctions can range from oral warnings to suspension or, in extreme cases, permanent exclusion. The decision to impose a sanction involves parental involvement by the management team through phone communication and, if necessary, in-person meetings.

We are fully aware that incidents driven by hate, such as racial discrimination, religious intolerance, homophobia, transphobia, or disability-based harassment, demand specialised attention and must be promptly reported. In such cases, we are committed to cooperating with the appropriate authorities, including the police and social services, if necessary. Additionally, we strongly encourage the parents or guardians of the victims to report these incidents, ensuring that the incidents are properly addressed and justice is pursued.

9. Recording – Data Collection Management

The school will record all bullying incidents on its Child Protection and Online Management System. Recording incidents enables the gathering of information on the number and nature of bullying incidents and the identification of any developing trends.

The data will also enable the school to promote the welfare of students.

Bullying data can be used to:

- Provide monitoring reports to students (through the school council, for example) and staff;
- Create evaluation reports for:
- Students, parents and staff in order to demonstrate openness and to celebrate progress;

10. Confidentiality:

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if a pupil approaches them for help. Staff must make this clear to pupils. Child protection procedures must be followed when any disclosures are made. It is very rare for a pupil to request absolute confidentiality. If they do, staff must inform the DSL members in situations other than those involving child protection issues.