

KAMUZU ACADEMY



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Date updated: 24th September 2024

Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of Philosophy

- Kamuzu Academy school community is based on an ethos of mutual respect and consideration. The school and the Board of Governors are committed to providing a safe and happy learning environment for all.
- We do not tolerate bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination of any kind
- We work hard to prevent any form of bullying occurring
- Bullying is a whole school issue and we take a whole school approach in response. Any member of the community may bully or be a victim of bullying: we regard all incidences of bullying equally seriously and in turn expect all staff, pupils and parents to play their part in preventing and tackling bullying.

1. Aims and Objectives

- This policy sets out the Academy's zero tolerance position on bullying and the robust procedures that will be followed whenever any form of bullying is suspected, known or reported.
- Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and has serious psychological, educational and welfare impacts.
- Any pupil who engages in an act of bullying must rapidly and authentically modify his or her behaviour.
- The Academy takes seriously its obligation to ensure that pupils and staff enjoy a safe working environment. It believes that all members of the school community have the right to learn and teach in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of intimidation or being bullied in whatever form.
- Accordingly, the aim of this policy is to establish a safe, friendly and caring environment for all members of the school community, where bullying is proactively discouraged and prevented, and whenever it does occur, for pupils to feel safe and confident in reporting such incidents, knowing that such incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying can be defined as unwanted and often aggressive behaviour intended to evoke emotional distress (such as feeling upset, uncomfortable or unsafe) and/or physical harm.

The UK Department for Education defines bullying as **'behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'**.

Therefore any behaviour that a reasonable bystander would say was intended to hurt or upset the victim is wrong and could constitute bullying, including complicity that may fall short of participating directly in the bullying. It is no justification that the perpetrator says or believes that the victim is not upset or hurt by his or her actions or words. Much bullying is performed in subtle ways, which are not easy to detect; a bully can use a simple look, word or gesture to a victim to signal an intended threat or insult. Some pupils are adept at changing a bullying situation into an apparently harmless one when an adult approaches. This makes it all the more important for the victim or another pupil to be able to come forward to report bullying, and for staff and parents to be alert to symptoms of bullying. Bullying is always hurtful to the victim and damaging to the whole school community. Anyone and everyone who is involved in, or witnesses bullying is affected by it. It can cause great distress, unhappiness and psychological damage and at its worst lead to suicide. It can also be a criminal offence, for example if the behaviour amounts to harassment or threatening behaviour.

Bullying however can sometimes be confused with teasing. Sometimes pupils can feel hurt or upset because they have been teased or have fallen out with a friend. This is not the same as bullying. Bullying:

- Is deliberately intended to hurt or humiliate
- Involves a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves
- Is usually persistent
- Often involves no remorse or acknowledgement of the victim's feelings

Staff are ready to help and support pupils who have fallen out with friends, but such situations will not be treated in the same way as a case of bullying. However, the strategies we use may be similar because we acknowledge that over a period of time the impact on the pupil may be the same, and the situation could become bullying if it escalates.

2.1 Forms of Bullying

Bullying can take many forms – emotional, physical, racist, sexual, homophobic, verbal, or cyber, and include:

Verbal Abuse
Emotional Manipulation
Cyberbullying
Discrimination

2.2 Examples of Bullying

- persistent name calling;
- pointedly ignoring an individual resulting in isolation;
- interfering with another person's property on a regular basis
- making comments about family, friends, appearances, race, sexuality, religion, and personal matters;
- any comment on behaviour which upsets and causes hurt to another person;
- making false accusations or spreading rumours;
- hitting, pushing or aggressive interactions;
- writing derogatory comments of other students on school property;
- the use of technology to hurt or cause upset to another person – cyberbullying.
- Written: spreading antagonistic notes, letters, and/or messages;
- Graphic: a sketch or drawing that may contain harassing gestures towards another person;
- Cyber: all areas of the internet such as email, abuse of internet chat rooms and social websites;
- Mobile: threats by messaging and/or calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities;
- Racial: racist taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- Religious: directed towards a particular faith or worship or lack of faith;
- Gender/Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
- Sexist: sexist taunt, graffiti;
- Special Educational Needs (SEN)/Disability: aiming at a certain educational, mental, physical or sensory disability/impairment;
- Cultural: directed towards a particular culture;
- Physical: hitting, pushing, shoving or threatening to fight or physically intimidate.

3. Prevention

We aim to prevent bullying by fostering a whole school ethos of good behaviour, mutual respect, and consideration. We aim to create a safe, happy, and inclusive environment for learning, and encourage pupils to value diversity and difference, protect the vulnerable, and appreciate how their actions might affect others;

3.1 Strategies for Prevention

Raising awareness about bullying through opportunities in the curriculum, the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme, assemblies, and national events such as Anti Bullying Week, amongst others;

Developing pupils' social skills, confidence, resilience and self esteem; and defining the value of assertiveness in relationships as opposed to aggression, whether direct or indirect;

Making it clear to all that there are effective procedures for reporting, investigating and tackling bullying;

Making it clear to all that incidents of cyberbullying or bullying of any kind that occur off the school premises but have an impact on the classroom environment or relationships between pupils will be pursued with the same seriousness as bullying occurring within school;

Making it as easy as possible for pupils who are being bullied to talk to someone they trust and get help confidentially;

Having a strong pastoral team dedicated to pupil welfare and experienced in dealing with bullying issues. All our staff are trained in recognising and responding to bullying and staff awareness is raised through regular discussion of pupil issues in pastoral meetings. Action is taken to reduce the risk of bullying where and when it is known to be most likely to occur;

Taking pupils' views into account through the school council, and developing the roles that pupils can play in anti bullying work;

Ensuring all pupils sign the school's Acceptable Use Policy for Digital Devices and the Social Media Policy Agreements, which make it clear that cyberbullying is unacceptable. This message is regularly reinforced in lessons and pastoral sessions;

Working in line with any UK national guidance, and following the requirements of any Malawian regulatory bodies.

3.2 Possible Signs of Bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to go to school or return after a break
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, work that appears to have been copied, or interfered with or spoilt by others
- Belongings suddenly going missing or being damaged

- Change to established habits
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Inability to concentrate
- Anxiety, depression, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Reluctance to leave the classroom at the end of lessons
- Choosing the company of adults
- Frequent visits to the clinic with symptoms such as stomach pains or headaches, especially at particular times or during particular lessons
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Difficulty in sleeping, nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for these symptoms, teachers, parents and fellow pupils should be alert for these possible signs of bullying and contact a member of the pastoral team if they are concerned.

4. Procedures

The exact course of action will vary with each situation but the main objectives should be that bullying incidents are brought into the open and strategies agreed to help resolve the problem.

Each incident will be treated as a special case and will be initially dealt with by either the Subject Teacher or the Tutor. If it is deemed to be a more challenging situation the the Head of Department or the Housemaster/Housemistress (Hsm) will be informed. If it is considered serious or persistent, firstly the Deputy Head Pastoral or Deputy Head Academic should be informed, and they will escalate the case to the Headmaster if they feel it is appropriate.

The most important thing is to stop the bullying and ensure the victim is safe; Should bullying be suspected the following procedures should be undertaken:

- The bullying concern should be recorded on MyConcern.
- In many reported cases of bullying, the Subject Teacher / Tutor or the Head of Department / Housemaster/mistress will deal directly with the children involved, to resolve and further monitor the situation. Parents will be informed.
- In case of persistent or serious incidents or concerns, the parents of both the victim and the accused will be informed and will individually meet with the Deputy Head Pastoral to discuss the problem. A written record will be made with actions noted. The situation will be monitored, and sanctions may take place.
- Any child exhibiting bullying behaviour will be educated in ways that are designed to address and change their behaviour.

- Persistent or repeated bullying will result in more serious action.
- The victim may receive additional support where deemed appropriate, from the Head of Student Wellbeing.
- The bully may receive additional support and mentoring to avoid repetitive patterns of behaviour.
- Wherever possible, the Academy will employ restorative practices for all parties and seek to reconcile pupils.
- The Academy will respond in a timely and effective manner.
- The Academy maintains written records and details of resolutions/sanctions.
- Deputy Head Pastoral and Deputy Head Academic, in consultation with the relevant Housemaster/mistress and/or Head of Lower/Upper School will regularly review records to identify any patterns and report to the Senior Leadership Team and Designated Safeguarding Teams as appropriate and when necessary for further action.

A bullying incident will be regarded as a child protection concern when there is ‘reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm’ (Children Act 1989). Where this is the case, the incident will be reported to the DSL. If appropriate, after the Headmaster has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the relevant organisations in Malawi and in certain cases the police.

5. Sanctions

Where pupils do not respond to the measures put in place to resolve the issue it will be necessary to use the sanctions outlined in the school’s behaviour policy.

Sanctions for bullying are in line with the School’s Behaviour policies. Any sanctions imposed will be fair, proportionate and reasonable, take account of any special educational needs or disabilities that pupils may have, and consider the needs of vulnerable pupils.

Strong sanctions, such as suspension and expulsion, may be necessary in response to single severe incidents or persistent cases.

Appendix A

Support and advice for those who suspect they are being bullied

If you are being bullied:

- Stay calm and try to appear confident. Tell the bully to stop and get away from the situation as quickly as you can;
- Do not suffer in silence: talk to a member of staff. This could be your subject teacher, tutor, Hsm, Senior Hsm, Dame, Head of Student wellbeing, a clinic staff member, or any other member of staff you trust. If you are unhappy about talking to a member of staff directly, you could talk to someone in your family, a friend, a prefect or an older pupil etc. Telling does not make you a 'grass' or 'snitch': not telling means that the bullying is likely to continue. Remember you may not be the only victim;
- Be assured that we take every report of bullying seriously and will act upon it, even if it occurred outside the school. We will keep records of what has happened, and consult you and support you in whatever action we take;
- Remember being bullied is not your fault – nobody ever deserves to be bullied.

If you know that someone else being bullied:

- Talk to a member of staff, so that the school can take steps to help the victim;
- Stand up for them – studies show that one of the most effective ways of stopping bullying is for fellow pupils to show their support for the victim;
- Be sceptical about rumours concerning other pupils. Don't add to them. Put yourself in the position of the person targeted;
- Don't be drawn into simply standing by. Many perpetrators will not persist in bullying unless they have an audience to play to, and by not taking action it could be argued you are condoning what is happening.