Anti-Bullying Policy

Vision: Grow - Flourish - Succeed
Mission: Together we inspire creative, mindful learners who value diversity, support one another and strive for success.

1. Introduction

Bullying is an action taken by one or more children, often with the deliberate intention of hurting, upsetting and intimidating another child. Bullying is most often unprovoked and a repeated behaviour that could take place within and/or outside the school premises and online. It can be direct (in the form of physical, verbal or emotional abuse), or indirect (such as being ignored or not spoken to).

Examples:

- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books).
- Religious discrimination and/or racism: racial taunts, excluding other students because of their religious/racial background, graffiti and gestures.
- Gender: unwanted physical or verbal contact based on gender.
- Harassment: threatening or disturbing behaviour inflicted on another.
- Cyber: all areas of the internet, such as social media (applications and platforms), Microsoft TEAMS, e-mails and internet chatrooms, mobile use and any misuse of associate technology i.e. camera and video facilities.

2. Purpose of policy

GEMS Founders School is a diverse school which accepts children of all religions, cultural backgrounds and nationalities. We are committed to ensuring the well-being of all our children and providing a caring, friendly and safe environment so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We also encourage our students to be constantly mindful and sensitive to other peoples' feelings and opinions. Therefore, the purpose of this anti-bullying policy is to nurture a school ethos where bullying is considered unacceptable and to promote a whole school approach to prevent bullying. Students will understand the importance and have the confidence to approach staff to 'speak out' about bullying and all staff should take this seriously. In addition, this supports the Learning Culture Policy of the school.

3. Aims and objectives

Bullying is wrong and damages the morale of individual children. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety, through promoting a mindful approach and attitude amongst our students.

This policy aims to produce a clear and consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.

- To have a clear outline of procedures in place within the school environment to discourage bullying occurring and to make clear each person's responsibilities to help eliminate any bullying that is reported.
- To make the expectations of the GFS anti-bullying policy clear to all pupils.

Signs and symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or change in behaviour that he or she may be being bullied. Some possible signs include:

- being frightened of walking to or from school
- not wanting to go on the school bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to a specific lesson/subject school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- has snack or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber-message is received
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

This is not an exhaustive list and children may display other behaviours that appear out of character. Parents should contact school staff should they have any concerns. Staff must remain vigilant about bullying behaviours and approach this in the same way as any other category of Child Abuse; that is, do not wait to be told before you raise concerns or deal directly with the matter. Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; because they may be too young or have a level of Special Educational Needs which means that they may be unable to realise what others may be doing to them. Staff must also be aware of those children who may be vulnerable pupils.

4. Consequences

All known/reported incidences of bullying will be investigated by the class teacher, form tutor, school councillor or by a senior member of staff. Parents of the perpetrator may also be questioned about the incident or about any concerns. The child displaying unacceptable behaviour, will be asked to make a sincere apology (as appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding). Other consequences may take place.

E.g. a parent being informed about their child's behaviour and a request that the parents support the school with any sanctions that it feels appropriate (See Behaviour for Learning Policy). Where appropriate, children will be supported to be reconciled through restorative conversations.

In serious cases (this is defined as children displaying an on-going lack of response to sanctions, that is, no change in behaviour of the perpetrator and an unwillingness to alter their behaviour choices), actions such as support from behaviour outreach, counselling, reduced timetables or even fixed or permanent exclusion will be considered according to KHDA guidelines.

During and after the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be recorded in the Bullying Log (See Recording Bullying section and Appendix 1) and monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

5. Prevention

At GEMS Founders School we use a variety of methods to support children in preventing and understanding the consequences of bullying through class assemblies, PSHE and Character Education lessons, the school Vision, our ethos of 'mindfulness' and assembly themes, e.g. in Anti-bullying week. Throughout the year, pupils will be consulted through in-school pupil questionnaires about their whole school experience, including a section on how safe they feel in school.

The ethos and working philosophy of GEMS Founders School means that all staff actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Good and kind/polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded. Staff will regularly discuss bullying. This will inform children that we are serious about dealing with bullying and lead to open conversations and increased confidence in children to wanting to discuss bullying and report any incidents and concerns about other children's behaviour.

What Staff Can Do

- Staff must reinforce expectations of behaviour as a regular theme in line with our Vision, Mission and our learning expectations.
- Staff must follow the equality policy and support every child in our school.
- Staff must be careful not to highlight differences of children or an individual child, even if this is done in jest. This gives other children advocacy to use this difference to begin calling names or teasing.
- Staff must be vigilant regarding groups of friends together. Friendship groups may bring about the imbalance of power and must be led towards welcoming others to join them and not excluding others from their group.
- Staff must reinforce a general message that whilst children do not have to be friends with everyone else, they must be friendly and respectful of everyone else's feelings and be kind to each other.

What Children Can Do

Children can and will be involved in the prevention of bullying as and when appropriate, through:

- Contributing a set of school or class rules
- Writing a personal pledge or promise against bullying
- Writing stories or poems or drawing posters about bullying
- Reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- Making up role-plays about what to do through scenarios of bullying
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters that children who use unacceptable behaviour towards others are dealt with quickly

If a child feels that they are being bullied, then there are several procedures that they are encouraged to follow (not hierarchical):

- Tell a friend
- Tell a teacher or adult whom you feel you can trust
- Tell a parent or adult at home whom you feel you can trust
- Discuss with the school councillor

6. Recording of Bullying Incidents

When an incident of bullying is shown to have taken place, staff must be prepared to record and report it each and every time. If a member of staff other than the class teacher witnesses or is informed of an act of bullying, they should refer it to the class teacher, form tutor, Head of Year, school councillor or by a senior member of staff who then records and investigates it. In the case of racist bullying, this must be reported to the Principal or Vice-Principal. General incidences of bullying should be recorded in the Behaviour Log, this would include incidents where staff have had to become involved and speak with children, and/or where parents have raised concerns regarding bullying. Confirmed cases of bullying must be recorded following the Record of Concern procedure, as with any case of Child Protection.

The Principal should advise which level of ROC should be used. All incidents of bullying will be discussed with all relevant staff and parents of the children involved, in order that everyone can be vigilant and that further incidents by the same child(ren) may be prevented from happening in the future. Incidents of bullying will be discussed with the Local Advisory Board and/or GEMS Education.

7. Parental involvement: Advice for Parents

As the parent of a child whom you suspect is being bullied, you could do the following:

- Report bullying incidents to the Class Teacher, Head of Year or Key Stage, Head of Inclusion (Marium Rafiq), Head of Primary (Mary Kennedy), Head of Secondary (Patrick Tidd), the Vice Principal (Amanda Herron), Associate Principal (John Stapley) or Principal (Mr Matthew Burfield).
- In cases of serious bullying, staff must record the incidents and the Principal notified
- In serious cases, parents should be informed and will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the problem
- If necessary and appropriate, police can be consulted

Do Not:

- Attempt to resolve the situation yourself by confronting the child you believe is behaving inappropriately towards your child, or by approaching their parents directly
- Encourage your child to retaliate or engage in similar inappropriate behaviour

8. Equal Opportunities

GEMS Founders School recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve, a diverse school community which includes people from differing backgrounds, with different skills and abilities. The school will take positive steps, through its governing body, managers and other employees, to create a school culture in which people

can feel confident of being treated with fairness, dignity and tolerance, irrespective of their individual differences. This commitment extends to the whole school community and others connected with it. The school is committed to the elimination of unlawful discrimination and to the promotion of good relations between all.

9. Roles and responsibilities

The Role of the Children:

- To talk to a trusted adult if they feel they are being bullied or have witnessed bullying of any nature
- Students are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying that they witness, even if they are not directly involved but observe the behaviour as a bystander
- Students are encouraged to respond assertively and safely to bullying behaviour. They are provided with a range of age-appropriate strategies to do this effectively, whether they are directly experiencing bullying or witnessing it as a bystander

The Role of Parents:

- To contact their child's Class/Form Teacher if they are concerned that their child may be experiencing bullying, or if they suspect that their child may be engaging in bullying behaviour
- To support our Anti–Bullying Policy and actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the GEMS Founders community (See the section above for further guidance for parents)

The Role of Teachers and Support Staff:

- To take all forms of bullying seriously and seek to prevent it at all times
- To participate in Anti–Bullying events
- To keep records of any incidents that happen in their class
- To support Staff to report incidents to Class Teachers
- To deal with any issue of bullying immediately, either through whole class discussions or individually
- Contact Head of Year, Assistant Head Teacher, Head of Inclusion or Senior Leadership Team if the issue continues
- Use a range of methods to prevent bullying and to create an environment of trust and respect for all
- Be aware of, and familiar with the Anti–Bullying policy

10. Covid 19 and remote/distance learning

There is a zero tolerance of cyber bullying and all cases or concerns must be reported to school. Online safety videos are shared with students and parents are informed on how to support their child through GEMS Connect and the school Social Media Accounts. Students are also informed about their expected conduct on any communication platforms and if any behaviour is seen as being inappropriate or displaying signs of bullying the teacher should inform the parents and report this on Safeguarding which is monitored by Heads of Years/Assistant Head Teachers.

Please see the Learning Culture Policy for more detail.

11. Monitoring and review

This policy has been discussed and agreed by the GEMS Founders School teaching staff and leadership teams for implementation.

Signed ..... Date 22 June 2026.....
Whole School Vice Principal

Signed ..... Date 22 June 2026.....
Associate Principal

Signed ..... Date 22 June 2026.....
Executive Principal/CEO/Executive Vice President of Education

Next policy review date:
August 2027