



HILLCREST
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

HIS Anti-Bullying Policy

(Whole School)

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Related policies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Behaviour Policy- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy- Welfare Policy- ICT Acceptable Use Policy

This policy applies to the Secondary School, Hillcrest Boarding, Preparatory School and EYFS.

Introduction:

Official Documentation for Hillcrest International Schools, Nairobi.

'Bullying in any form is unacceptable and can have a devastating effect on children, young people and their families. It is important that we all take a stand against bullying so we can help create safe and inclusive places for young people both in schools and online.

It's crucial that our children and young people know how to treat one another with respect and celebrate one another's differences.' (Children and Families Minister Will Quince (November 2021))

Definition: Bullying is behaviour, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group, physically or emotionally. One person or a group can bully others. There is often a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate; there is a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves and it is usually persistent.

This policy aims at ensuring that there are measures in place to keep children safe from Bullying and to ensure that Hillcrest is a 'Bullying-Free Zone'. The policy provides clear guidelines on the steps to follow in determining outcomes and concerns around Bullying

This policy also refers to:

- Child Protection Policy
- The Welfare Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- ICT Acceptable use policy (Pupils)
- ICT Acceptable use policy (Staff)
- Inclusion Policy
- Hillcrest Boarding Handbook for Parents and Students
- Hillcrest Boarding Management Handbook

Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent – if it fulfills all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of sexual, sexist, cyber, racist, religious, or homophobic bullying and when children with disabilities are involved. If the victim might be in danger then intervention is urgently required.

Hillcrest International Schools recognises the seriousness of bullying in causing psychological damage and even suicide, and that, although not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Bullying has no place in the school community, and this applies both to the bullying of students and teachers. Bullies and victims can be children and adults. It is possible for students to bully staff and senior students bullying younger students, and vice versa.

Enforcement of the Anti-bullying Policy falls under the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead for each school of Hillcrest International Schools.

School Responsibility

All staff have a shared responsibility and obligation to uphold and implement the Anti-Bullying Policy, at all times. Regular enhancement of our School Values, including our zero-tolerance to Bullying is enforced through, amongst others, assemblies, house meetings, PSHCE, our daily operations as well as through the unspoken messages we constantly give out. That which matters to us –Independence, Curiosity, Determination, Respect, Decency, Consideration for others and empathy need to be lived and provide a climate in which bullying will not thrive.

Types of Bullying

Bullying includes: name calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; inappropriate touching; producing offensive graffiti; spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours or always leaving someone out of groups. It is also bullying when a pupil is pressured to act against their will by others.

Bullying includes, but is not limited to the following forms:

1. **Cyber bullying**: Increasingly, bullying is happening through new technology. This can involve sending inappropriate or hurtful text messages, emails, instant messages, social websites or posting malicious material, including photographs, online. 'Cyber bullying', as it is often called, might take the form of 'real world' bullying being played out online.
2. **Racist and religious bullying**: This can be defined as 'A range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national states. No pupil should be made to feel inferior because of their background, culture or religion. It is vital that all pupils are valued and learn to respect others.
3. **Sexual bullying**: This includes any behaviour, whether verbal, physical or non-physical, where sexuality is used as a weapon by male or by female. Sexual bullying refers to bullying simply because the victim is a male or a female, based on singling out something specifically gender linked. Sexual bullying also includes sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
4. **Homophobic bullying**: This targets someone because of his or her sexual orientation (or perceived sexual orientation). It can be particularly difficult for a young person to report, and is often directed at them at a very sensitive phase of their lives when identity is being developed. What might be called banter can be deemed harassment if it is at the expense of someone's dignity and meant offensively.
5. **Disability bullying**: involving pupils with disabilities employs many of the same forms as other types of bullying, with name calling and pushing and shoving being common. Young people with disabilities report being bullied in the street, on the bus and in shops and at college. Prejudice against them is evident in the primary years and is often resistant to change in the secondary years. It should be addressed as early as possible.

Please note that the victims of bullying do not necessarily fall into any of these categories, they are still victims and may also be targeted.

Aims of the Anti Bullying Policy

It is accepted that bullying can occur in many forms of which some may be: intimidation, physical abuse, name calling, negative discrimination, graffiti, acute unkindness.

Our aims are:

1. To prevent, de-escalate or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
2. To prevent bullying incidents in a proportionate and consistent way.

3. To safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for that pupil.
4. To apply disciplinary sanctions to the perpetrator and to ensure that they have learned from the experience thereby developing positive behaviours which display kindness, sensitivity and compassion in their dealings with their peers and staff.
5. In the event that we are unable to stop the bullying from taking place using the above measures, any other necessary action will be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of all members of our community, as guided by the Behaviour Policy

Prevention of Bullying at Hillcrest International Schools:

We at Hillcrest International Schools, aim to foster a secure environment in which pupils are able to develop and learn freely without duress.

There are many ways within the life of the school where issues relating to bullying can be addressed. PSHCE lessons offer a very positive opportunity to talk about this issue and the impact of such lessons cannot be underestimated. Whole school assemblies, as well as mini-assemblies offer a useful forum for general debate and the highlighting of bullying and how to deal with it.

The following statements seek to establish the school's commitment to prevent bullying taking place and to offer positive action when bullying is reported.

- At all levels in the school community, it will be made clear that bullying is unacceptable, that it will not be tolerated and that there are solutions that work. It is accepted that the prevention of bullying is a whole community concern and that no one in the community deserves to be bullied.
- Staff should actively demonstrate positive behaviour to set a positive context for Anti-bullying in the school.
- Form tutors emphasise the school's policy on behaviour regularly and allow time for discussing behaviour as the need arises. Pupils will be positively encouraged to talk about any experiences or issues that are troubling them. Whilst bullying can occur anywhere and at any time, the school identifies 'at risk' areas and times and provides adequate supervision.
- The curriculum can be used to support the prevention of bullying at Hillcrest International Schools.
- PSHCE can be used to discuss issues such as diversity and to draw out antibullying messages.
- 'Circle time' type activities, role play and drama allow pupils to consider and reflect upon their actions in a secure, non-threatening way. The abuse of social networking sites and mobile phones for bullying can be addressed in Computing as part of the safe use of ICT.
- The use of art, poetry, drama, music and dance can be used to develop the pupils' understanding of feelings and enhance pupils' social and emotional skills. Whole school assemblies can be used to highlight the school's Anti-Bullying policy and develop the pupils' social and emotional literacy.
- Events such as theatre groups, exhibitions and current news stories can be used to prompt further understanding of bullying.
- Staff and other adults working with pupils must be vigilant in order to notice signs of bullying. Recognition, identification and reporting of any form of bullying is the duty of everyone with vigilance being the key. This applies to school transport providers as well as staff on the school premises.
- It is school policy that, if necessary, at staff meetings, there will be a forum to discuss issues relating to the pupils' academic and pastoral welfare. Additionally, staff regularly talk together about pupil issues.
- Staff reinforce Hillcrest values through awarding of merits and mentioning individuals in assemblies to recognise and celebrate positive behaviour. The

Hillcrest Secondary Ubuntu merits are used to celebrate individuals who display kindness, compassion and respect for others.

Anti-bullying strategies at Hillcrest Boarding.

This policy recognises that boarding students who may be bullied 'cannot escape their bullies for long periods of time as they are not going home as often' (National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022). In order to deter bullying at the Boarding, in addition to whole-school facilities available to students, the following is also enacted in the boarding House:

- Boarding staff is available at all hours. There is always a member of staff on duty who is physically present before school starts and immediately after school ends until bedtime. After bedtime, students have access to house parents residing on the compound. Two members of staff reside in the dorms whilst two reside in close proximity. Close and round the clock staff supervision enables the boarding team to recognise and act upon irregular behaviour.
- To reduce the risk of sexual harassment/ intimidation/ bullying, Public Display of Affection is disallowed or strictly supervised.
- Boarders are not allowed in the dorms of the opposite sex (ie Girls are not allowed in the boys' dorms and boys are not allowed in the girls' dorm.)
- All Boarding staff undergo bespoke Boarding Safeguarding and Child Protection training.
- Boarding Prefects are encouraged to foster good relations with their peers which enables them to peer mentor and counsel as well as to act as confidants. Prefects are encouraged to disclose incidences of bullying to any member of the Boarding staff.
- Boarders have access to an 'independent person' who is easily accessible (National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022)

Action:

All reported incidents of bullying are followed up and appropriate action taken and monitored according to the school's Behaviour policy and any other relevant policy. The nature of the action will vary depending on what has taken place and what is considered appropriate in terms of support and punishment. In broad terms disciplinary action is designed to achieve the following outcomes:

- Impress on the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable.
- Deter him/her from repeating that behaviour.
- Empowering and facilitating positive behaviour changes through a variety of means including community service, leading workshops and presentations, organising supervised meetings between the victim and perpetrator to begin to make amends.
- Signal to other students that this behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

How can we help our victims?

Victims of bullying will be supported by:-

- Offering them the immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a form teacher or member of staff of their choice
- Reassuring the pupil
- Offering continuous support
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence

Perpetrators who have bullied will be supported through:-

- Discussions about what happened and their role in the bullying incident - this should be led by Heads of Section and may include Form Tutor, prefects and peer counselors.

- Empowering and facilitating positive behaviour changes through a variety of means including community service, leading workshops and presentations, organising supervised meetings between the victim and perpetrator to begin to make amends.
- Invitation of parents involved to discuss continued support outside school

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:-

- Informal and official warnings to cease offending
- Zoning in certain areas so the perpetrators is not in contact with the victim
- Exclusion from certain activities
- Detention
- Fixed-term exclusion

In the event that the above disciplinary steps are not successful in modifying the behaviour, Hillcrest International Schools will undertake an investigation by an independent panel as per the Complaints Procedure Policy and further action may be taken as deemed appropriate depending on the findings of this panel.

Parents of the child who has been bullied may be in need of emotional support. The school will support them in every way that it can, and will call in the services of a counsellor if appropriate.

The school expects wholehearted support from parents/ guardians in disciplining a student who has been bullying. In some cases an informal school/parent behaviour contract may be drawn up. In the event of lack of parental support for the school's anti-bullying disciplinary measures, and continued bullying behaviour on the part of the student, the school may consider exclusion. No one will be excluded from school as a result of being bullied.

Recording of Bullying

All communication and information in regard to pastoral or welfare concerns, including the bullying incident is recorded on iSAMS as well as on emails. The information includes statements, emails to parents and pastoral/ welfare concerns or demerits.

All Behaviour concerns must be logged on iSAMS (In the Rewards and Conduct Module)

At the end of each year, an audit of bullying will be taken by the pastoral team and recommendations made to modify this policy and change the way the school approaches bullying where necessary.

Staff Guidelines

1. Be vigilant in and outside the classroom. When on duty be aware of areas where problems can arise, such as the toilets, cloakrooms and playground. Look out for those students who appear to be isolated and report this to the student's form teacher.
2. Do not confront pupils or staff about unkind or anti-social behaviour and when such incidents occur inform the relevant form tutors.
3. If you suspect or receive information that an individual or a group is being bullied or is bullying, you should respond by talking to the individuals involved and recording the information on iSAMS then passing it on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
4. If you receive information about possible bullying from pupils or colleagues you

should respond by talking to the individuals involved and if verified, recording the information on iSAMS, passing it on to the form tutor and then to the DSL.

5. Form and class teachers have a very important role to play in creating a 'Bullying-Free Zone' at Hillcrest and if the bullying persists they will inform all staff who are concerned with teaching both the victim and the bully.

6. Parents must be kept informed of any incidents relating to bullying. Equally parents should inform their child's form tutor or a member of the SLT if they suspect or know that bullying is taking place. It is hoped that staff vigilance and good home/school links resulting in prompt action will reduce the incidence of bullying.

7. Report changes in behaviour such as the student becoming shy and nervous and feigning illness with regular visits to the sick bay or frequent absences due to 'tummy aches', becoming clingy and tearful or not wanting to come to school. These are all indicators that could signify all is not well at school.

Hillcrest International Schools recognises the importance of CPD for staff in recognising and dealing with bullying at school.

The pupils need to be reminded regularly of the need to share their worries with either their friends or adults in the community. Form and specialist teachers, as well as the Headteacher are always available to the pupils. Pupils are also encouraged to share their concerns with their families and adults at home.

This Anti-Bullying policy is intrinsically linked with the school's policy on behaviour and staff code of conduct in striving to achieve a positive working and learning environment where all members of the community have respect and tolerance for one another.