



GREEN VALLEY ISLAMIC COLLEGE

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Policy Statement

At GVIC it is a **ZERO** tolerance for a student or group of students to bully or harass any student, or group of students. Students attend school to participate in quality education that will help them to become self directed, lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and the wider community. Any inappropriate behaviour that gets in the way of teaching and learning at the school and interferes with the wellbeing of students cannot be accepted.

Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a shared responsibility to create a safe and happy environment, free from all forms of bullying.

We believe that all members of the community have the right to learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. We all share a responsibility to create a culture of caring which will not tolerate bullying.

This policy builds on the school's pastoral care policy to provide clear and agreed procedures and strategies for combating bullying in the school, responding to bullying behaviours and protecting and supporting all parties involved.

Flowing from the Islamic vision, the school is to establish relationships which are grounded in love, compassion, reconciliation and justice. In witnessing Islamic values we reject ideas, beliefs and behaviours which marginalise or victimise people.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying takes many forms, all of which cause distress. Examples of bullying include:

- physical (hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, punching)
- verbal (using offensive names, ridiculing, racist remarks, teasing, abuse)
- non-verbal: writing offensive names or graffiti about others,

- psychological (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups, making inappropriate gestures, hiding or damaging possessions).
- property: stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property
- cyber bullying : malicious SMS and email messages

Cyber bullying includes:

a. Harassment

This is repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages.

b. Flaming

Flaming can be online fights using electronic messages with angry or inappropriate language.

c. Impersonation

This can be pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material to get that person in trouble, or to damage that person's reputation or friendships.

d. Trickery

This is talking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, then sharing online.

e. Exclusion

This can be intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group.

f. Cyber stalking

This is repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates a significant fear.

g. Denigration

This is sending or posting gossip, photos or rumours online about a person to damage reputations or friendships.

Values and Beliefs

At GVIC, we believe that students:

- will be safe at school
- have the right to learn
- can expect to know that their concerns will be responded to by school staff
- will be provided with appropriate support
- And all members of the school community have a right to respectful and fair treatment.

Responsibility of Student is to:

- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity;
- follow the school's culture;
- respond to incidents of bullying according to the School's Anti-Bullying policy.
- treat one another with mutual respect;
- behave according to Islamic values and morals;
- play safely and report all bullying incidents;
- co-operate with other students and staff and;
- refuse to be involved in any bullying situation.

Responsibility of Teacher's is to:

- respect and support students in all aspects of their learning;
- be both role models and guardians. That is, we must model respect in our own relationships and protect the rights and responsibilities of others;
- demonstrate positive behaviours in our own relationships;
- be aware of the potential influence of both our intended and inadvertent behaviour;
- have lessons that are climate orientated as well as task orientated;
- offer generous praise for pro-social and helpful behaviours by students;
- also praise friendly and supportive behaviours of students toward one another on a frequent basis;
- teach non-violent, non-racist, and non-sexist ideas, values and behaviours, as a core part of the every-day curriculum;
- teach social skills, including communication, making friends, accepting feedback from others, conflict resolution and appropriate assertiveness;
- promote positive relationships and enhance the school experience for students by developing a good rapport with them;
- provide better supervision during recess and lunch and,
- promote specific class rules against bullying and emphasise the immediate consequences of bullying.
- model appropriate behaviour;
- arrive to class on time and move promptly between lessons;
- respond in an appropriate and timely manner to incidents of bullying;
- encourage and assist children to work towards mutual goals
- assist children to try to see the situation from different points of view
- help children to learn how to communicate their feelings by suggesting words to use or alternative way to express their emotions.
- encourage all parties to be honest with their opinions and feelings. Remember apologies may be useful, however only if offered sincerely.

Responsibility of Parent's / Caregiver's is to:

- support their children in all aspects of their learning
- assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour
- help their children learn negotiating and mediating skills
- discourage their child from fighting back
- assist children to try to see the situation from different points of view
- encourage and assist children to work towards mutual goals
- watch for signs of distress in their children, e.g.: unwillingness to attend school, missing equipment, requests for extra money and damaged clothes or bruising;
- take an active interest in their children's social life and acquaintances;
- advise their children to tell a teacher if they are being bullied;
- inform the School if bullying is suspected and not take matters into their own hands;
- must not encourage their children to retaliate;
- be willing to attend interviews at the School if their children are involved in any bullying incident and;
- be willing to inform the School of any cases of suspected bullying even if their children are not directly affected.

Factors contributing to bullying

There are various contributory factors to the problems of bullying. A major factor is lack of supervision at home and School.

Home or Family: Poor supervision of child may contribute to bullying behaviour. A lack of attention and warmth towards the child, together with the modelling of aggressive behaviour at home by family and caregivers is a known factor.

School: low levels of supervision in the school particularly in the school courtyards, hallways, canteen area and sometime the changeover of periods are also associated with the development of bullying problems.

The Potential Impact of Bullying

Students who are bullied may:

- Be unwilling to come to school or attend erratically;
- Feel frightened for their safety
- Develop feelings of negative self worth, possibly leading to feelings of isolation;
- Feel embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated
- Disconnect socially from peers
- Exhibit “at risk” behaviours, such as anxiety or depression
- Have long term problems in maintaining interpersonal relationships and in sustaining self esteem
- Have performance in their school work deteriorate;
- Be withdrawn or isolated, start stammering;
- Have a desire to remain near adults especially at break times;
- Find their possessions going “missing” ;
- Have unexplained bruises, scratches or cuts;
- Become distressed, eat very little and;
- Refuse to say what is wrong and give improbable excuses to explain any of the above.

The Possible Impact on the School Community

Although the effects of bullying may be most painful for the individual victim, bullying can create “Shockwaves” across an entire school community. It may be responsible for some of the following:

- Feeling of anger, tension or disharmony amongst students or staff
- A perceived lack of trust and cohesion between members of the school community
- An abnormally high number of aggressive actions
- Feelings of guilt , shame or helplessness as the result of knowing about or witnessing bullying
- An atmosphere which seems unsafe or uncaring
- A reduction in community confidence in the school

Mentality of the Victim and the Bully

For any intervention to be successful in the long term it is important to understand the bully.

They will frequently use 'difference' as an excuse for their bad behaviour. It is not the difference in the victim which causes the problem. It is the bullies who have the problem because they are afraid, envious, cruel, angry, insecure or unhappy. They often show no sympathy for the victim and will try to avoid apologies.

Victims are sensitive in nature, perhaps emotional, lacking in self-confidence and sometimes with an uncertain sense of humour. They experience similar problems of self image to those of the bully. They may be lonely and isolated in the larger environment although secure at home and in small groups. They may be physically small or weak and unlikely to retaliate.

Long-Term Consequences for Victims, Bullies, and Bystanders

Victims of bullying typically are very unhappy children who may suffer from fear, anxiety, and low self-esteem. If bullying patterns go unnoticed in the school, the victim

- may try to avoid school, and social interaction;
- more likely to be depressed and suffer low self-esteem and;
- experience significant psychological harm which interferes with their social, emotional and academic development.

Serious long-term outcomes for bullies are also important to recognise. Bullies tend to become aggressive adults who stand a much higher chance of taking their bullying behaviour into their career workplaces.

Another important but often overlooked group of students who are affected by bullying are the bystanders. They may not take the initiative to bully themselves, but will follow a bully's lead in helping to harass or victimise a particular student. Students, who observe violent behaviour and see that it has no negative consequences for the bully, will be more likely to use aggression in the future.

Procedures to deal with Bullying

A. What to do if you are being bullied:

1. Try to ignore the bullying or say 'No' firmly then turn and walk away. You must do this forcefully and walk away immediately.
2. Try not to retaliate in a physical or verbal way.
3. Try not to show that you are upset or angry. If you can hide your emotions the bully will get bored and leave you alone.
4. Tell a friend and ask him/her for help. It is harder for a bully to pick on you if you have a friend with you for support.
5. Try to avoid being alone in places where the bully is likely to pick on you.
6. Tell a sympathetic teacher. Bullies depend on secrecy. If you need help do not be embarrassed about asking for it? Everyone needs help sometimes teachers can only help if they know about the problem.

B. What to do if you see someone being bullied.

1. Find a teacher straight away and explain what you have seen or heard.
2. Do not ignore the bullying. Everyone has a responsibility to prevent bullying. (Think how you would feel if it was happening to you).
3. Make sure that you do not get involved in the bullying.

C. What will happen if you report bullying at school?

1. At GVIC we take bullying seriously and we investigate all incidents of bullying.
2. We support students who are being bullied.
3. Take appropriate action against the bully.
4. We counsel the bully.

Action Taken By Staff

- Intervene immediately. The care of the victim of bullying should be your first priority.
- Teachers should respond to any incidents of bullying immediately and unambiguously even if some aspects of the response are dealt with at a later stage. A teacher's own reactions to incidents of bullying will influence the attitudes of the children. For example, failure to respond to an incident may be construed as condoning bullying behaviour.
- When an incident of bullying is witnessed, the teacher should, as soon as possible obtain a report of the incident. Both parties should be interviewed separately. If more than one student is involved in perpetrating the bullying, talk to each of the perpetrators separately.
- All serious incidents must be reported to the Welfare Co-ordinators, or the Deputy Principal.
- The Welfare Co-ordinators will then investigate the matter further and will determine whether the incident merits contacting the parents of those children involved.
- Immediate suspension will follow (as outlined in the Discipline Policy). The length of suspension will be based upon the severity of the bullying behaviour (at the Co-ordinators' discretion).
- Both the perpetrator and the victim will be offered counselling in order to develop positive social skills and help prevent any recurrence.

GVIC'S Preventive Strategies

1. Education and promotion of the school's Anti bullying Policy through assemblies and posters
2. Tell the children from Day One that bullying (verbal or physical) is not tolerated in the school)
3. Preventative curriculum measures for raising awareness e.g. topics such as racism, religious studies etc
4. Classroom rules applied consistently
5. Develop classroom management plans
6. Ample supervision of students during breaks, on playground ovals etc
7. Active intervention when bullying occurs
8. Student code of conduct
9. Welfare policy
10. Peer support / mediation
11. Peer tutoring during DEAR time
12. Incidents reported to Welfare Coordinator for taking appropriate actions of students who are being bullied

Green Valley Islamic College's Guidelines Against Bullying

Green Valley Islamic College does not tolerate bullying in any form. All members of the School Community are committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment which promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem for all.

The consequences of unacceptable behaviour are clearly stated in the School Discipline Policy. The school recognises that quality education requires effective communication between stakeholders. It has established both formal and informal mechanisms to facilitate such communication.

Our School can intervene effectively to reduce bullying by developing a safe and supportive school climate.

We must all work together to help create an academic environment free from cruel acts of violence.

By following our School Anti-Bullying policy, we are promoting a safe and secure School environment for all students and staff.

Communication with Parents

Formal mechanisms include:

- Informal Evenings
- A school newsletter sent home every fortnight
- Other Parent Notes for excursions, competitions and state-wide tests
- Parent/Teacher evenings
- Orientation Days Kindergarten and Year 7
- Annual Magazine
- Information booklet given to new enrolments to the college
- Media Advertisements in the Local Paper regarding enrolments
- Report Cards and Portfolios
- Visitor Brochures

The school is to introduce a purpose – designed school diary. The diary is to promote communication between teachers, students and parents/ carers regarding:

- Key school policies
- Homework and assignments
- Notices distributed to Parents/Carers
- Assessment tasks

Also, it will provide a mode for communication from the school to the parents/caregivers, and a log that documents those occasions where parent/caregiver attention may be required. It will contain notes on goals, study skills, taking notes etc.