ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to help ensure that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable. It is intended to be succinct and understandable. This policy should be read in conjunction with the COA International's Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Verb: to treat cruelly, persecute, intimidate, frighten, oppress physically or morally by the threat of superior force, to behave purposely in a cruel or intimidating way. (Concise Oxford Dictionary.)

Noun: a bully is a person who is habitually cruel to others weaker than him/herself.

Bullying may be repeated over time and intentionally hurts another student or group physically or emotionally.

FORMS OF BULLYING

Bullying can come in many forms and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups. This **is prejudice-based bullying** because of a protected characteristic. For example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, gender, homophobia sex (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender [LGBT] students), special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer – it may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email). This latter is Cyber-bullying. Active management of hardware, software and connectivity and the vigilance of teachers and parents each have their part to play in the safeguarding and protection of students.

Whatever the form, it is always someone (the bully) being cruel to someone else (the victim) weaker than himself or herself. Whatever form it takes, "it is a pattern of behaviour which results in another student feeling uncomfortable because of some real or perceived difference. It sometimes takes the form of taunts or "jokes" but can also include silent exclusion of a student by others, or a whispering campaign against them. More overtly, it involves physical violence or intimidation.

Whilst it is not our policy to force any students to be friends with other students against their will, we will not allow any student(s) to harass, bully, intimidate or in any way cause another student to feel unwanted, different or alienated. **COA International has a zero-tolerance policy on the subject of bullying.**

Bullying is considered a Child Protection issue where abuse is so severe it becomes a criminal offence and outside agencies would become involved. Any bullying incident should be treated as a Child Protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This is the threshold for reporting a bullying issue to external agencies (such as police/children's social care) and records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of anti-bullying procedures and to enable patterns to be identified.

Vulnerable children who have learning difficulties or disabilities are susceptible to bullying. COA International has a zero-tolerance policy on bullying of children who fit into this category too.

Bullying can cause psychological damage and "bullying in school should be taken very seriously; it is not a normal part of growing up and it can ruin lives" – Department for Education.

THE LEGAL SITUATION

The law requires that all staff involved in the education of children should:

a) promote good behaviour and exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students;

b) prevent all forms of bullying among students and identify where there are concerns and take action to address them;

c) ensure as far as possible that pupils remain free from bullying or harassment. Where there is a child with special educational needs or a disability, the school must have effective means of communicating with the child and assessing its needs.

HANDLING

a) Acknowledge the problem when it does happen. In other words, confront it when it occurs, whether in the online classroom, off-site in the case of cyber-bullying or if it is reported in a parental letter or student report.

b) Handle it immediately: Stop the bullying. Write reports giving factual data of who is involved and the incidents. Route these to feedback@coaint.com for handling within 24 hours, including weekends, in a full written report.

c) Both victim and bully are routed to the Headmaster. In handling the bully, the sanction must be sufficient to overcome the compulsion to commit the bullying action. Disciplinary sanctions are implemented which reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect (strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying) which reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect.

d) Normal sanction gradients apply from there on according to the School Rules and may result in expulsion. If the matter becomes a Child Protection issue, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed and report to the relevant outside agency.

e) Educate the students: Adopt a whole-school approach and teach the students how to handle a bullying situation and encourage them to always speak out. Use educational elements such as personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), assemblies, projects, drama, stories, literature, with a discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language. These are the means by which the school builds resilience in its students to protect them and their peers through education and information.

f) Reward/acknowledge any student who helps to prevent bullying whether actively involved or as a bystander.

g) Records of bullying are kept by the Headmaster. This helps to ensure that the impact of bullying on individual students is being monitored and to ensure that an overall picture is maintained between different aspects of school.

TRAINING FOR PREVENTION

All staff must be familiar with this policy, and the following school policies:

- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Education Needs or Disability Policy

All staff have a role to play for online safety as part of the school's wider safeguarding strategy. Staff must be willing to take action to reduce the risks of bullying at the times and in the places when and where it is most likely to occur.

All staff members receive annual safeguarding professional development that includes online safety.

Parent and student surveys are used as an additional means of reporting, detecting and handling instances of bullying.

The school sends parents/carers a briefing about online safety. Personal data is managed in line with the school's Privacy Policy.

Vladimir Krasniakov

Headmaster

Date Reviewed	Approved By
15 of March 2021	Headmaster
23 of February 2022	Headmaster