



Our Own English High School, Al Ain takes seriously its obligation to ensure that pupils and staff enjoy a safe working environment. The school believes that all people in the school community have the right to learn and teach in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of intimidation or being bullied. Every individual in school has the duty to report an incident of bullying whether it happens to themselves or to people. OOL promotes a culture in which students are not afraid to report bullying, actively encouraging the reporting of incidents in order that interventions can be made.

OOL strives to be a community in which everybody feels valued and safe and within which individual differences are accepted, tolerant and regarded positively. Every student has the right to enjoy school. Bullying issues form a key part of the Wellbeing Programme, along with assemblies, which is underpinned by the UAE Moral Education Programme.

It is an individual's right and responsibility to take a stand on bullying, whether the victim is yourself or somebody else.

1. What is bullying?

Bullying is usually defined as behaviour by an individual or group, **repeated over time**, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It takes many forms but includes:

- Physical violence; punching, hitting and pushing
- Mocking, ridiculing or tormenting somebody
- Offensive, racist name-calling or using any obviously hurtful names
- Gossiping and spreading rumors
- Exclusion, deliberately ignoring someone and encouraging others to do the same
- Insulting someone
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour
- Taking and damaging property
- Offensive telephone calls, emails and text messages to others

Bullying may also be racial, regarding someone's religion, belief or culture, related to a person's home circumstances/family or related to a person's age, disability, special educational needs, learning difficulty, health or appearance.

A bullying incident will 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. Where this is the case, staff should report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Leads who will contact the relevant authority, if deemed necessary.

Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, the School may consider drawing on a range of counseling service to support the student who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

The Designated Safeguarding Officers:

- Mrs. Blessy Varghese, Student Counselor: blessy.v_ool@gemsedu.com who can be contacted on 052-1066433 or 03-7679747 Ext. 226 during School hours.
- Mr. Rocky Miller, Principal: who can be contacted on 03-7679747 Ext. 214 during the school hours.

2. What is Cyberbullying?

Bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. It can also include harassment or cyberstalking, defamation or vilification, unauthorized publication of private images, manipulation or peer rejection.

Breaking the Cybercrime Law – Federal Law No.5. Student need to be aware that any incidences of cyberbullying, which contravene the Federal Law of the U.A.E., may be subject immediately to Permanent Exclusion.

There are many different methods by which cyberbullying takes place. The following list is not exhaustive; while the development of information and communications technology is so rapid new styles of cyberbullying are emerging constantly. Moreover, young people are particularly adept at adapting to new technology.

The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Twitter
- SMS (Short Message Service) also known as Text Message sent through devices
- Instant Message (via devices, email provider services, apps, and social media messaging features)
- Email

E-safety assemblies are built into the focus of the month programme. Student counselor explores the topic further to school to address students and teachers as well as parent forums.

3. Actions for those being bullied.**Who can you turn to if you are bullied?**

- Your parents
- Your close friends
- Student Counselor/ Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Any member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Any teacher with whom you feel you have a relationship of trust
- The School Nurse

What can you yourself do if you are bullied?

- Tell the bully to stop. Make it clear that the behaviour is unwelcome and hurtful.
- Seek help. Talk to someone you trust.
- Approach Happiness Ambassadors

- Report it to either to the teacher present at the scenario and Student Counselor. OOL does not tolerate bullying. Trust the school to deal with any incident in the appropriate manner.

What should you do if you know someone else is being bullied?

- Care enough to take action, whether you are personally involved or not.
- Intervene at an early stage so that the problem is dealt with before it gets out of hand.
- Have the courage to report it.

4. Preventing Bullying.

What can you do to prevent bullying?

- Respect yourself and others.
- Try to create a relaxed atmosphere in school for everybody.
- Do not follow friends when you disagree with what they are doing.
- Learn to be tolerant and broad-minded and to rejoice in individual differences.
- Be aware of the school's anti bullying policy and give it your full support.

5. Assurances about Bullying.

What assurances can the school provide on bullying?

- We take a zero tolerance stance.
- We expect a high standard of behaviour at all times.
- We aim to provide a safe and caring environment for everybody.
- We have a policy for detecting, preventing and dealing with bullying.
- We have a pastoral care system that provides genuine support to students which includes but is not limited to restorative justice sessions and peer support.

What assurances can the teachers provide on bullying?

- If you have been bullied you are not to blame.
- Nobody deserves to be bullied.
- Everyone is entitled to enjoy school.
- Staying silent solves nothing.
- "We are here to help!"

How can parents help?

- Show a real interest in your child's social life and in school events
- Encourage your child to have friends round, to join clubs and to be tolerant and broad-minded towards others.
- Build up your child's self-esteem by emphasizing positive features and accepting individual characteristics.
- Discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with your child and suggest positive strategies if his/her rights are abused.
- Do not tell your child that bullying is part of growing up or imply that it is in any way acceptable.
- Encourage your child to take action on bullying by reporting, but do not tell him/her to retaliate either physically or with name-calling.

- Show an example by being firm but positive and not aggressive in your approach to discipline.
- Confront the possibility that your child may be a bully. If the school contacts you suggesting that your child may have been involved in bullying, try not to go on the defensive or to find excuses for the bullying behaviour. Work constructively with the school to find a solution to the issue.
- **If your child is being bullied, please report it; the school can then take action.**

What disciplinary structures exist to deal with incidents of bullying?

Warning (Level 1):

If a student start to behave in a manner which could develop into or be interpreted as bullying, wherever possible a warning will be given (Level 1). In this way, it is hoped that many potentially serious situations will never escalate.

However, the warning stage is at the discretion of the school, and a student involved in a serious instance of bullying will bypass this stage and be placed onto the relevant scale of OOL Behavior Management Policy.

Level 2

Where, after due investigations, the school is satisfied that bullying has occurred, it will be explained to the bully why his/her behaviour is unacceptable, and positive strategies will be pursued to raise his self-esteem as well as to protect the victim. The bully's parents will be informed by letter. Referral to Behavior Modification Centre (BMC) would be done to make the bully reflect on his/her behavior.

However, this is entirely at the discretion of the school, and any student previously on Level 2 who is involved in a further instance of bullying will be placed directly on to Level 3.

Level 3 (SLT)

If the bullying continues, arrangements will be made to minimise contact between bully and victim. The bully's parents will be called into school to discuss the situation. The bully will sign a statement promising that the bullying will not be repeated.

Level 4 (Internal/External Exclusion)

Where there is no improvement in the bullying, the bully will be excluded (temporarily suspended) from the school for at least 2-3 days. This may be internal or external depending on the severity of the case along with prior history of such behaviour.

Level 4 (Permanent Exclusion)

As a last resort, and when it is clear that the bully consistently endangers the welfare of fellow members of the school community, he or she will be permanently excluded from OOL.

Review of Policy

The bullying policy is monitored by SLT and reviewed on an annual basis.

Policy Details	
Version date	March 2023
Last review	March 2023
Next review	March 2024
Responsible Reviewer	Counselor & SLT