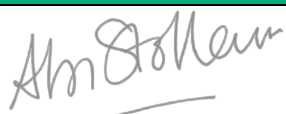


**RAHAINTERNATIONALSCHOOL KHALIFA
CITYCAMPUS**

POLICIES

Policy title	Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy
Policy number	KCC_POL_
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Approving Committee	Name	Signature
Principal	Abigail Fishbourne	

Introduction

At Raha International School KCC, we are committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment where all students, staff, and the broader school community are treated with respect and dignity. We acknowledge the importance of addressing bullying and cyberbullying proactively, and we recognise the harmful effects these behaviors can have on students' wellbeing, academic success, and overall development.

This Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy is designed to prevent and respond to bullying in all forms, in alignment with the principles of restorative practice and the regulations outlined by the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK).

Purpose

The purpose of this Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy is to outline the collective responsibility of students, staff, and the broader community at Raha International School KCC to create and maintain a safe and supportive school environment where all individuals are free from the harmful effects of bullying and cyberbullying. This policy aims to:

1. **Promote a culture of respect and inclusivity**, where differences are valued and all individuals feel safe, accepted, and supported in their academic and personal growth.
2. **Prevent instances of bullying and cyberbullying** by raising awareness, promoting positive behaviors, and fostering an environment of empathy and mutual respect.
3. **Provide clear guidelines** for identifying, responding to, and addressing bullying and cyberbullying incidents in a timely, fair, and restorative manner.
4. **Support the well-being of all members of the school community**, particularly those affected by bullying, by offering emotional and psychological support through restorative practices and counseling services.
5. **Empower students, staff, and parents** to recognise, report, and address bullying behaviours, creating a strong partnership between home and school to prevent and resolve incidents.

Through this policy, Raha International School KCC strives to protect the dignity, safety, and mental well-being of every member of our community, ensuring that bullying and cyberbullying are not tolerated and that all students can thrive in a respectful and nurturing environment.

Scope

This Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy applies to all students, staff, and members of the Raha International School KCC community. It covers incidents of bullying and cyberbullying that occur both within the school environment and outside of school hours, provided they impact the safety, wellbeing, and learning of students at school. The policy encompasses all forms of bullying, including physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying,

and outlines the roles and responsibilities of students, staff, and parents in preventing and addressing such behaviour.

Definition of Terms

- **Bullying:** Deliberate, harmful behaviour by an individual or group, intended to intimidate or hurt others. It involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is often repeated over time.
- **Cyberbullying:** A form of bullying that occurs through electronic means, including social media, text messages, emails, and other digital platforms, with the intent to harm or harass others.
- **Restorative Practice:** A method of addressing bullying incidents by focusing on healing, accountability, and repairing relationships through open dialogue and mutual understanding.
- **Physical Bullying:** Acts of aggression such as hitting, pushing, or other forms of physical harm intended to cause distress or pain.
- **Verbal Bullying:** The use of harmful words, insults, or mockery aimed at hurting or belittling an individual.
- **Social Bullying:** Actions that aim to exclude, isolate, or embarrass someone, including spreading rumors, gossiping, or purposefully leaving someone out of a group.
- **Power Imbalance:** A situation where one individual or group holds more power, either through physical strength, social influence, or number, making it difficult for the victim to defend themselves.

Policy Statement

Raha International School KCC is fully committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all members of our community. We believe that every student has the right to learn, grow, and thrive without the fear of bullying or cyberbullying. We are dedicated to preventing bullying in all its forms, addressing incidents promptly and effectively, and supporting those impacted by bullying behaviours.

This policy applies to all students, staff, and community members and reflects our commitment to fostering a culture of respect, empathy, and responsibility. We strive to create a learning environment where differences are valued and where students feel safe and supported, both physically and emotionally.

Bullying

At Raha International School, we strive to promote healthy relationships and ensure a safe environment for all members of the school community. The UAE Ministry of Interior Child Protection Center identifies bullying and peer abuse, and cyber bullying under its child protection dimensions, "The Ministry of Interior Child Protection Centre will work, in collaboration with other entities and agencies, to address the issue of bullying among children in order to ensure that children do not suffer the harm that is often associated with this activity" (MoI- CPC, 2016).

Aligned with the policies and guidelines of the Ministry of Interior Child Protection Center, RIS treats any form of bullying as a serious offence and as such does not tolerate or trivialize bullying behaviours:

“Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.” Bullying may be verbal, physical and or social. Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to: making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites. (Stopbullying.gov)

Cyber bullying is particularly dangerous as it usually involves relative anonymity and the ability to reach large audiences. Furthermore, material once online may never be completely removed. Examples of cyberbullying include but are not limited to: mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

It is expected that parents work in cooperation with the school to educate our students about the seriousness of cyber bullying. While some incidents of cyber bullying do occur at school, most reported cases occur outside of school hours. In these cases we work together with parents to ensure that this behavior stops. If the cyber bullying action adversely affects the safety and wellbeing of a student while in school, RIS will take disciplinary action against those students involved. RIS students who commit cyber bullying will be subject to the consequences for bullying in the Matrix of Consequences. Students are encouraged to report all incidents of bullying, and community members are expected to enforce the policy.

Classification of different kinds of bullying (Educational and administrative Staff)

Kinds of Bullying	Direct	Indirect
Verbal Abuse	Verbal insults	Persuading another person to criticise or insult someone
	Unfair criticism	Spreading malicious rumours
	Name calling	Anonymous phone calls and emails
Gestural Abuse	Threatening or obscene gestures	Deliberate turning away or averting
	Menacing stares	one's gaze to ignore someone
Physical means	Striking	Getting another person to assault someone
	Throwing things	
	Using a weapon	
	Removing and hiding belongings	
Relational bullying	Forming coalitions against someone	Persuading people to exclude someone

At Raha International School KCC, we understand that bullying can take many forms, and we aim to address all instances regardless of the medium in which they occur.

For an action to be bullying it should satisfy the following conditions:

- The actions are intended to hurt someone or put them under stress.
- The person being targeted cannot defend himself or herself adequately, for example because he or she is physically weaker, outnumbered (having no supporters) and does not have the skills to resist. There is ALWAYS a power imbalance.
- Typically, it is repeated over time.
- It is not the same thing as fighting or quarrelling between people of equal power.
- Nor is it the same thing as friendly teasing, which the target acknowledges as being made in fun.

Assessing the Severity of Bullying

Low severity commonly involves thoughtless periodic teasing, name calling and occasional exclusion. This can be annoying and unpleasant and can escalate and then involve more serious forms of bullying. Most bullying is at this level.

An intermediate level of bullying occurs when a child is subjected for a time to forms of harassment which are both systematic and hurtful. These may include cruel teasing, continual exclusion and some threats or some relatively mild physical abuse, ex) pushing or tripping.

Severe bullying occurs when the harassment is cruel and intense, especially if it occurs over an extended period and is very distressing to the victim. It frequently involves serious physical assaults, but it can still be severe when the bullying is non-physical if the methods used are unremitting, occur over an extended time period and are psychologically damaging.

Signs a child is being bullied:

Physical:

- Unexplained bruises
- Scratches or cuts
- Torn clothes
- Damaged belongings

Psychosomatic:

- Non-specific pains

Headaches

- Abdominal pains
- Mouth sores

School related behaviours:

- Afraid of riding on the school bus
- Asking to be driven to school
- Unwilling to go to school
- Deterioration in school work
- Coming home starving (because lunch money was taken)
- Reporting loss of possessions
- Asking for or stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Fear of walking to or from school
- Change of route to school

Changes in social behaviour:

- Having fewer friends
- Not wanting to go out

- Being invited out much less often

Emotional indicators:

- Appearing upset, unhappy, lonely, tearful, distressed
- Becoming withdrawn and depressed
- Stammering
- Suicidal thinking
- Unexpected mood swings

Worrying behaviours:

- Irritability and temper outbursts
- Stopping eating
- Over-eating
- Being unable to sleep
- Nightmares
- Bed wetting
- Crying out during sleep
- Refusing to say what is wrong.

Indicators of poor health:

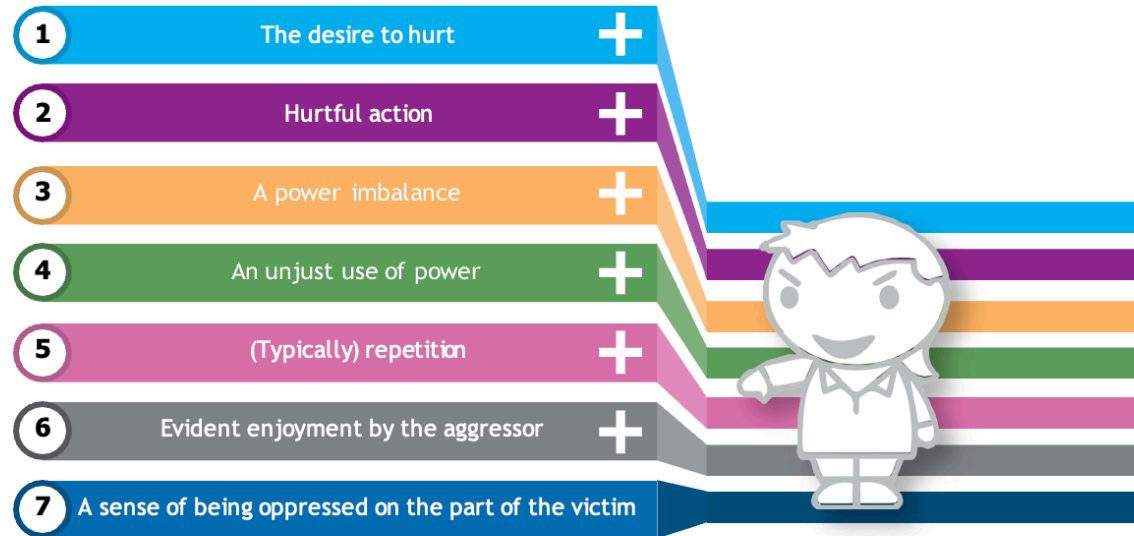
- Being generally tired or run-down
- Low resistance to infection
- Recurring illnesses
- Threatening or attempting suicide

Research has shown that these are some of the effects on repeatedly bullied students:

- Bullying can seriously damage the mental health of some vulnerable children and it can last for a life time.
- Children who are repeatedly bullied at school are often unable to learn their lessons. They find it hard to concentrate and may stay away from school.
- Children who repeatedly engage in school bullying are much more likely than others to commit crimes and harm others unless their behaviour is changed.

The Seven Elements of bullying (Educational and Administrative Staff)

These elements are typically* found when cases of bullying occur:



Restorative Practice Approach

We approach bullying and cyberbullying incidents through restorative practices, focusing on healing, accountability, and the restoration of relationships. Our goal is to create a school environment where everyone feels valued, heard and supported.

Restorative practice emphasizes:

- Understanding the harm caused by bullying.
- Encouraging accountability and responsibility in the person who has bullied.
- Providing support for the person who has been bullied.
- Repairing relationships to rebuild trust and promote reconciliation.

Key Principles

In alignment with ADEK policies and our school values, the following principles guide our approach to preventing and addressing bullying and cyberbullying:

1. **Prevention:** Creating a positive school culture that promotes respect, empathy, and inclusivity.
2. **Intervention:** Addressing any incidents of bullying promptly and effectively, ensuring all involved parties are supported.
3. **Restoration:** Facilitating restorative conversations and activities to rebuild trust and foster understanding.
4. **Education:** Raising awareness about the impact of bullying and teaching students how to behave responsibly in both physical and digital spaces.
5. **Partnership:** Collaborating with families, the wider community, and external organizations to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students.

Responsibilities of Students

Students at Raha International School KCC are expected to:

- Treat all members of the school community with respect, kindness, and fairness.
- Report any incidents of bullying or cyberbullying they witness or experience to a trusted adult (teacher, counselor, or school leader).
- Participate in restorative processes, where appropriate, to help repair harm and restore relationships.
- Engage in discussions and activities designed to promote empathy, respect, and responsibility.

Responsibilities of Staff

Staff members are responsible for:

- Modeling respectful behaviour and fostering a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all students.
- Identifying and addressing potential bullying behavior promptly, using a restorative approach.

- Providing students with guidance on appropriate behaviour both in-person and online.
- Supporting students involved in bullying through counseling, conflict resolution, and restorative practices.
- Collaborating with families and school leadership to address any concerns regarding bullying.
- Engaging in regular professional development on anti-bullying strategies, restorative practices, and ADEK's policies.

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

Parents and guardians have a key role in supporting the school's efforts to combat bullying. They are expected to:

- Encourage their children to treat others with respect and kindness.
- Support their children in following the school's expectations regarding behavior, both on and off school grounds.
- Report any concerns or incidents of bullying to the school, either directly or via the designated channels.
- Be active partners in restorative processes when their child is involved in bullying, whether as the victim or the perpetrator.
- Monitor their child's online activities and guide them on the responsible use of technology.

Procedures for Addressing Bullying and Cyberbullying

When bullying or cyberbullying is reported or observed, the following steps will be taken:

Investigation:

- The school will investigate the incident in a timely manner, ensuring the safety of all students involved.
- All parties will be interviewed, including witnesses and those directly involved in the bullying incident.
- The severity and frequency of the bullying will be assessed, as well as the context in which it occurred (e.g., whether it was face-to-face or online).

Support:

- The person being bullied will receive support from the school counselor and other relevant staff members.
- The student who engaged in bullying behaviour will be provided with an opportunity to reflect on their actions and will be supported in taking responsibility for their behaviour.

Restorative Conversation:

- Restorative practice will be used to engage the individuals involved in a dialogue about the harm caused, with the goal of understanding each

other's perspectives, addressing the impact of the bullying, and making amends.

- The process will be facilitated by a trained staff member (e.g., counselor or restorative practice coordinator) to ensure it is fair and effective.

Follow-up:

- A follow-up plan will be put in place to monitor the situation and ensure that bullying behaviour does not recur.
- The school will keep parents informed throughout the process and provide ongoing support as needed.

Prevention and Awareness Programs

The school will implement ongoing prevention strategies to reduce bullying and cyberbullying, including:

- **Anti-bullying week:** To promote awareness and encourage positive behaviours.
- **Assemblies:** Age-appropriate programmes for students to understand the consequences of bullying and the importance of respect and inclusivity.
- **Digital Citizenship Education:** Teaching students how to safely and responsibly use digital platforms and how to recognise, report, and prevent cyberbullying.

Reporting and Confidentiality

Students, parents, and staff are encouraged to report any concerns related to bullying or cyberbullying to school staff. Reports can be made in person, by email, or through the school's reporting platform.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation process, with information shared only with those directly involved in addressing the situation. The identity of students who report bullying will be protected, and retaliation against individuals who report bullying is not tolerated.

Disciplinary Action

While the primary approach is restorative, disciplinary actions may be necessary and will follow the Behaviour Policy. The severity of the consequences will depend on the nature of the incident, the impact on the victim, and whether the individual has shown remorse. Disciplinary actions may include:

- Restorative meetings with students and staff.
- Loss of privileges (e.g., extracurricular activities).
- Parental meetings and counseling sessions.
- Suspension or expulsion for severe or repeated incidents, in accordance with ADEK guidelines.

By fostering a culture of respect, responsibility, and inclusivity, Raha International School KCC is

dedicated to preventing bullying and cyberbullying and ensuring that all members of the school community feel safe, supported, and valued. Through a collaborative approach and the principles of restorative practice, we aim to address any issues that arise and guide students toward positive behaviors and conflict resolution.

This policy aligns with ADEK's regulations and is integral to the holistic development of our students in both physical and online spaces.

Revision Log

Date	Changes	Reviewed By

