

RGS Muscat Bullying and Harassment Policy



Written by	
Approved by	
Review Date	

1. Introduction:

1.1 This policy outlines the obligations and processes for RGS Muscat in the prevention of, and to respond to bullying or harassment involving children or students and is to be made available to all staff and students at the School.

1.2 Bullying and Harassment between staff and other members of the School community is dealt with separately in the Equal Opportunities and Complaints Policies.

1.3 The School has an obligation to prevent harassment, including bullying. This policy outlines the obligations and processes for the School to prevent and respond to bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment of student and children and applies to all staff and students at the school.

2. Bullying and Harassment Policy:

2.1 The School recognises its duty to children and young people to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity is respected and accepted.

2.2 Bullying and harassment are not tolerated at RGS Muscat.

2.3 Bullying and harassment are best managed through a 'whole of community' approach involving students, staff and parents.

2.4 The School should implement bullying and harassment prevention and response strategies on a continuous basis, with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents to recognise bullying and respond appropriately. They should tailor bullying response strategies to the circumstances of each incident and review them regularly.

3. Definitions:

3.1 Bullying: Bullying is a form of aggression where there is a power imbalance; the person doing the bullying has power over the person being victimised. Bullying is repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed toward a person or group, which creates a risk to health and safety.

3.2 Harassment: Harassment is similar to bullying because someone hurts another person through cruel, offensive and insulting behaviours. Harassment is different from bullying in that it is a form of discrimination. This harassment can be based on the following;

- Race (skin colour, facial features)
- Ethnicity (culture, where they live, how they live, how they dress)
- Religion (religious beliefs)
- Gender

- Family status (if they are from a single parent family, adopted family, step family, foster

family, non-biological gay or lesbian parent family)

- Marital status (if they are single, legally married, common-law spouse, widowed, or divorced)

- Physical and mental disability (if they have a mental illness, learning disability, use a wheelchair)

4. Staff Responsibilities:

4.1 School staff must:

- Model appropriate behaviour at all times;
- Deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy and the School's anti-bullying strategies;
- Ensure that any incident of bullying they observe or that is reported is recorded by staff in the ISAMs Wellbeing Manager;
- Monitor students that have been identified as either persistently experiencing bullying or engaging in bullying; and
- Acknowledge the right of parents to speak with the Head of Pastoral if they believe their child is being bullied.

5. What is Bullying?:

5.1 Bullying can be a single/one-off incident or repeated and unreasonable behaviour toward a person or group that can cause harm (a risk to wellbeing, child safeguarding and/or health and safety).

5.2 It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment. In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied, and bystanders.

5.3 Bullying can take many forms including:

- Physical bullying which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing or intimidating someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.
- Psychological bullying is when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include name calling, teasing or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background.
- Indirect bullying is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone.
- Cyber bullying is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or mobile phones.

** It should be noted that bullying can occur between students, staff, parents and other members of the School community. These acts are not confined to just students at the School. It should be noted that in the Parent Code of Conduct that there is zero tolerance towards parents and caregivers bullying members of School staff.

6. What is Not Bullying?:

6.1 There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

- Mutual Conflict Situations which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation; or
- ‘One Off’ Acts of aggression or meanness including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying, although they may still warrant an appropriate response and correction.

7. Signs of Bullying:

7.1 Bullying can result in behaviour changes in children and young people. These changes may include:

- Not wanting to go to school;
- Crying or having nightmares;
- Refusing to talk when asked “What’s wrong?”;
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches;
- A decline in quality of school work;
- Frequent tears, anger, mood swings and anxiety; • Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence;
- Beginning to bully siblings; or • Acting unreasonably.

7.2 Teachers and parents are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify a teacher or the Head of Pastoral, if they suspect their child or student is experiencing bullying or engaging in bullying.

8. Sexual Harassment:

8.1 Sexual harassment is where a person makes unwelcome sexual advances, or unwelcome requests for sexual favours, or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that a reasonable person would think might offend, humiliate or intimidate another person.

8.2 Sexual harassment may be a single act or repeated acts.

Examples of sexual harassment;

8.3 Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Pressure or demands for dates or sexual favours
- Unnecessary familiarity, eg. deliberately brushing against a person or constantly staring at a person
- Unwanted physical contact, eg touching or fondling
- Sexual jokes or innuendo
- Offensive telephone calls or communications via social/internet media

- Offensive sexual gestures
- Unwelcome comments or questions about a person's sex life
- Display or circulation of sexual material, including magazines, posters or pictures and email messages, including in electronic format
- Sending email or text messages which contain sexual content or tone,
- Any behaviour that creates a sexually hostile school environment
- Sexual harassment can be a criminal offence, including:
 - Sexual assault
 - Physically molesting a person
 - Indecent exposure
 - Obscene phone calls or emails/text messages/letters.

What is not sexual harassment?

8.4 Mutual attraction between people is not sexual harassment. Conduct which is welcome or consensual is not unlawful. Friendships (sexual or otherwise) that develop between students who meet at school are a private concern provided they do not adversely impact on the students' experiences at school.

8.5 It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that conduct is welcome (not the other person's responsibility to object if it is unwelcome).

9. Bullying and Harassment Plans;

9.1 The School has implemented the following initiatives as part of anti-bullying and harassment strategies and efforts to create a 'no bullying/harassment' culture within the community:

- A structured curriculum and peer group support system (Peer Coaching Programme, vertical house system, PSHE curriculum and Student Code of Conduct), that provides age appropriate information and skills relating to bullying and harassment (including cyber bullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year.
- Education, training and professional development for staff in bullying/harassment prevention and response strategies.
- Information to parents, to raise awareness of bullying/harassment as a community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, and to provide them with clear paths to raise concerns they may have relating to bullying.
- Promoting a supportive environment that encourages positive relationships and communication.
- Reporting incidents of alleged bullying in line with processes outlined below; and
- Recording reported bullying/harassment incidents and analysing them to identify children who persistently experience bullying or engage in bullying victims, to implement targeted

support and prevention strategies where appropriate through a Restorative approach but inline with this policy and the School's Behaviour Management Policies.

10. Reporting Bullying and Harassment:

10.1 Students and their parents are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying/harassment incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse.

10.2 Bystanders are encouraged to whistleblow any incidents of bullying and harassment that they witness or suspect. All members of the community will be protected by the School's Whistleblowing policy (linked to Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy).

10.3 The School encourages reporting of bullying incidents and provides assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents) that:

- Bullying/harassment is not tolerated
- Their concerns will be taken seriously, and
- The School has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.
- Parents or children can report bullying verbally or in writing to any of the following people: •
A teacher
- A Key Stage Coordinator or Head of Department
- A student's Head of School; or
- The Head of Pastoral or the Principal.
- The School will deal with the report in line with their anti-bullying strategies. Issues that cannot be resolved at the school level may be dealt with under the Stonyhurst International School Complaints Policy.

11. Responding to Bullying:

11.1 Bullying can vary enormously in extent and intent and each incident must be dealt with on its facts.

11.2 In all circumstances the School will:

- Take time to properly investigate the facts;
- Take time to understand any concerns of individuals involved;
- Maintain records of reported bullying incidents; and
- Escalate the response when dealing with children who persistently engage in bullying and/or severe bullying incidents.
- The School's response to bullying may include:
 - Notifying and consulting with parents;
 - Offering emotional support and/or counselling to children who persistently experience bullying or engage in bullying;
 - Implementing effective follow up strategies to support children who experience bullying or manage children who engage in bullying; and
 - Appropriate disciplinary action, in line with the School's Behaviour Management Policy.
- In line with the School's Behaviour Management Policy, all disciplinary responses to bullying (or other issues) must provide procedural fairness including ensuring decision makers and process are free from bias, decisions are based on evidence supported by the facts, and any person affected by the decision has an opportunity to present their case before a decision is made.

12. Definitions:

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12.2 Harassment: Harassment is similar to bullying because someone hurts another person through cruel, offensive and insulting behaviours. Harassment is different from bullying in that it is a form of discrimination. This harassment can be based on the following;

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- Race (skin colour, facial features)
- Ethnicity (culture, where they live, how they live, how they dress)
- Religion (religious beliefs)
- Sex
- Family status (if they are from a single parent family, adopted family, step family, foster)
- Marital status (if they are single, legally married, common-law spouse, widowed, or divorced)
- Physical and mental disability (if they have a mental illness, learning disability, use a wheelchair)

13. Related Documents

- > Student Code of Conduct
- > Student Technology User Agreement
- > Junior and Secondary School Behaviour Management Policy > PSHE and PD Curriculum Policy
- > Equal Opportunities Policy
- > Expulsion, Removal and Review Policy