RAHA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

GARDENS CAMPUS

POLICIES

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Approving Committee	Name	Signature
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POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to all students, staff, and stakeholders at Raha International School, Gardens Campus. The school community is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment where every individual is free from bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

In every educational environment, safeguarding student wellbeing is a foundational responsibility. Among the most pressing threats to a safe, inclusive, and supportive school culture is bullying—a complex and multifaceted issue that deeply affects not only the individual but also the collective spirit of a school community. Raha International School, Gardens Campus, as an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, is committed to nurturing the intellectual, emotional, and social development of students through values of respect, compassion, and global citizenship. Preventing bullying is not simply a matter of school discipline; it is a moral and educational imperative.

The rationale behind a proactive, structured bullying prevention framework is anchored in evidence-based research, the rights of the child, and the obligation to create an environment where all students feel safe, valued, and supported. This document outlines the importance of bullying prevention, the consequences of inaction, and how

a comprehensive approach not only protects students but enhances academic performance, emotional development, and the overall health of the school community.

Our Vision:
To cultivate a caring, internationally-minded community that fosters empathy, respect, and personal responsibility in alignment with the IB Learner Profile attributes, particularly being caring, principled, open-minded, and reflective.

Aims:
- To actively promote a positive, supportive, and inclusive school culture.
- To deter bullying behaviour and ensure immediate and effective responses when incidents occur.
- To provide pastoral support and education to both the target and the perpetrator.
- To monitor and review anti-bullying measures for continuous improvement.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Understanding Bullying: A Multifaceted Challenge
Bullying is defined as repeated, intentional harm inflicted by one or more individuals over another who is perceived to be less powerful. It manifests in various forms: physical aggression, verbal harassment, social exclusion, psychological manipulation, and, increasingly, cyberbullying via digital platforms. At its core, bullying is an abuse of power, often rooted in prejudice, bias, or social dominance.

This behaviour is rarely a simple conflict between peers. Instead, it is often systemic, sustained, and can become embedded in school culture if not addressed. Research indicates that bullying can begin as early as early childhood and peaks during adolescence, a critical period for identity formation and emotional development. Left unchecked, bullying behaviour undermines trust, creates anxiety, impairs academic achievement, and can result in long-term psychological trauma for both victims and perpetrators.

Types of Bullying:
- **Physical:** Hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, taking, or damaging property.
- **Verbal:** Name-calling, teasing, insults, discriminatory remarks.

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- **Social/Emotional:** Exclusion, spreading rumours, public humiliation.
- **Cyberbullying:** Harassment through digital platforms, including social media, messaging apps, and online games.

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

Mild incidents: Annoying and unpleasant, can lead to more serious incidents. Most likely requires counselling, mediation, and peer education.

Intermediate bullying: 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 such as pushing. Most likely requires the use of direct sanctions, parental involvement, and individualised support plans.

Persistent or severe abuse: 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

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non-physical if the methods used are unremitting, occur over an extended time period and are psychologically damaging. Most likely requires significant disciplinary action per ADEK guidelines, including exclusion or expulsion where necessary.

Signs of bullying

Staff, parents, and peers should be aware of potential indicators of bullying, which include:

- Unexplained injuries or damaged belongings
- Reluctance to attend school or participate in activities
- Anxiety, depression, or withdrawal
- Loss of interest in schoolwork or a drop in performance
- Sleep disturbances or nightmares
- Complaints of physical illness without cause (headaches, stomach aches)
- Changes in friendships or avoidance of social situations

Impact of bullying

Bullying negatively affects academic performance, mental health, and school climate. According to the UAE national training program, bullying can lead to the following symptoms:

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

Psychosomatic
- Non-specific pains
- Headaches
- Abdominal pains
- Mouth sores
- Skin conditions

School-related behaviours

- Fear of walking to or from school
- Afraid of riding on the school bus
- Asking to be driven to school
- Unwilling to go to school
- Deterioration in school work
- Coming home hungry
- Reporting loss of possessions
- Asking for or stealing money

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

Indicators of poor health

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

Preventative approaches

Developmentally Informed Practices:

Our anti-bullying strategies are adapted to be age-appropriate across different stages—Early Years, Primary, and Secondary. We recognise that the way bullying manifests and is understood varies by age, and tailor our communication, curriculum, and intervention accordingly. Prevention requires more than isolated interventions; it demands a school-wide, systemic approach built on education, empathy, accountability, and restorative practices. Key components include:

Protecting Student Wellbeing

The foremost reason for preventing bullying is the physical and psychological safety of students. Victims of bullying are at greater risk for mental health disorders, including anxiety, depression, or worse. The effects of chronic victimisation are far-reaching, with studies showing that individuals who are bullied during their school years are more likely to experience emotional instability and social difficulties into adulthood.

Even witnessing bullying can have negative effects. Bystanders often experience guilt, fear, or desensitisation to aggression, which can damage empathy development and personal confidence. Therefore, bullying prevention is not limited to those directly involved; it promotes a healthier and more cohesive school culture for all.

Aligning with IB Values and the Learner Profile

The IB Learner Profile—central to the philosophy of Raha International School—advocates for the development of principled, caring, and open-minded individuals. Bullying directly contradicts these principles. Creating a culture that actively prevents bullying supports the development of IB attributes such as:

- **Caring**: Encouraging empathy and respect for the feelings of others.
- **Principled**: Acting with integrity and a sense of justice.
- **Open-Minded**: Valuing diverse perspectives and backgrounds.
- **Reflective**: Considering the impact of one's actions on others.
- **Communicators**: Expressing themselves in ways that promote understanding and collaboration.

A comprehensive prevention programme helps students internalise these attributes not only as educational ideals but as essential behaviours in daily life.

Enhancing Academic Success

Bullying does not occur in isolation from learning. Victims of bullying are more likely to avoid school, perform poorly in assessments, and disengage from academic tasks. A hostile or unsafe environment can significantly impair concentration, motivation, and cognitive performance. Conversely, students who feel emotionally safe at school are more likely to attend regularly, engage deeply in learning, and perform at their highest potential.

Moreover, schools with robust anti-bullying systems report fewer disciplinary issues, better classroom engagement, and stronger student-teacher relationships—all of which contribute to improved academic outcomes.

Building Inclusive and Equitable School Communities

Bullying often targets those perceived as "different"—due to race, religion, disability, socioeconomic status, or personal characteristics. Preventing bullying is thus a matter of social justice. It requires schools to critically examine structures and biases that may perpetuate exclusion, and to teach students to celebrate rather than fear diversity.

An effective anti-bullying programme is closely linked to equity and inclusion efforts. It empowers minority students, strengthens allyship, and ensures that no student is marginalised due to their identity. This aligns with global human rights values and supports the UAE's national commitment to tolerance and inclusive education.

Clear Policies and Reporting Mechanisms

Students, staff, and parents must have access to a clearly written, consistently enforced anti-bullying policy. At Raha, this transparency builds trust and shows students that their wellbeing is prioritised. This includes:

- Definitions and examples of bullying
- Reporting procedures
- Consequences for perpetrators
- Supports for victims

Education and Awareness

Students must be explicitly taught about:

- What bullying looks and feels like
- The difference between conflict and bullying

- How to speak up or report concerns
- The power of bystander intervention

Daily Community Practices

Each homeroom and advisory group is encouraged to hold regular class meetings or morning circles to build connection, reinforce values, and provide a structured space for students to voice concerns. These community times promote a sense of belonging and allow for proactive discussion around empathy, inclusion, and peer respect.

Staff Training

All staff receive annual training on identifying, responding to, and recording incidents of bullying. Training builds confidence and ensures all adults are active protectors. Teachers and school staff must be trained to:

- Identify subtle and overt signs of bullying
- Intervene appropriately and consistently
- Support both targets and perpetrators
- Facilitate restorative conversations and de-escalation
- Culturally responsive practices
- Legal and ethical duties under child protection frameworks

Positive Teacher Language

Staff are trained to use reinforcing, reminding, and redirecting language to help guide student behavior in a respectful, supportive manner. This approach builds trust and models respectful communication, helping prevent relational conflicts from escalating.

Student Voice and Leadership

Students are more likely to engage in prevention efforts when they are involved in them. Empowering students as Wellbeing Ambassadors, peer mentors, or members of inclusion committees allows them to take ownership of the school climate.

It also gives students who have experienced bullying an opportunity to become advocates, which aids in their recovery and empowers others. Students are trained and supported to be upstanders, not bystanders. Initiatives include:

- Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
- Peer Mentoring Program

- Student Wellbeing Councils
- Inclusion & Respect Campaigns

Peer Role Models
Select students are identified and trained as peer leaders to model respectful behavior, mediate minor conflicts, and reinforce a culture of kindness. These student role models help normalize positive peer interaction and build collective responsibility.

Restorative and Reflective Approaches
Punitive responses alone rarely result in lasting change. Restorative practices allow perpetrators to understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility, and repair harm. When combined with counselling or mentoring, these approaches foster deeper learning and accountability.

These may include:
- Restorative circles
- Mediation between students
- Apology letters
- Behaviour intervention plans
- Participation in awareness campaigns

Family Involvement in Prevention
In addition to responsive meetings, the school will provide opportunities for families to engage in anti-bullying workshops, digital citizenship sessions, and joint wellbeing campaigns. We believe strong home-school partnerships are essential for consistent messaging and cultural alignment.

Creating a Culture of Belonging
Ultimately, bullying prevention is not merely about stopping harmful behaviour—it is about building a culture of belonging. Students thrive when they feel connected, seen, and respected. Prevention efforts should be proactive, not reactive, and aim to:

- Foster cross-cultural understanding

- Create opportunities for connection through clubs, service projects, and team-building
- Encourage open dialogue on difference, identity, and values
- Celebrate kindness and positive peer behaviours

At Raha, the goal is not only to stop bullying but to create the conditions in which bullying has no space to exist. We promote a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, reflected in our code of conduct, IB values, and wellbeing curriculum. We cultivate respect through:

- The IB Learner Profile attributes
- School assemblies on respect, inclusion, and kindness
- Celebrations of diversity through calendar events
- Restorative conversations and circle time

Curriculum Integration

Bullying prevention and emotional literacy are embedded in the Wellbeing curriculum, with topics such as:

- Digital Citizenship & Online Safety
- Healthy Relationships
- Conflict Resolution
- Respect and Inclusion
- Mental Health and Empathy

Reporting systems

Every student has the right to report bullying without fear of retaliation. We maintain multiple, accessible reporting pathways:

- Confidential reports to any trusted staff member
- Digital reporting form (such as the counselor box in Primary G1-5, and the anonymous reporting portal via ePraise)
- Designated Wellbeing Leads and Child Protection Officer

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Staff and students are made aware of these mechanisms through posters, assemblies, and advisory sessions.

Response procedures

Immediate Response

All reports of bullying are taken seriously and investigated promptly by the appropriate pastoral leaders or Child Protection Team (CPT). Schools shall appoint a Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) and a Child Protection Team (CPT), and these appointments are reported to ADEK annually.

The CPC will undergo ADEK-mandated CPC training and would preferably be a senior member of staff or any other member of staff who has experience working with students at educational risk.

The CPT will undergo any ADEK-mandated training as announced and would typically include 3-5 members, consisting of the counselor and/or social worker, as well as relevant members of the Senior Leadership Team

1. **Initial Support**
   - Provide reassurance to the victim.
   - Remove the victim from the bullying environment if necessary.
   - Notify the Class teacher (EY, Primary), Head of Grade (Secondary), or Wellbeing Coordinator
2. **Investigation**
   - Interviews were conducted with the alleged victim, perpetrator, and witnesses.
   - Evidence gathered (screenshots, witness statements, CCTV if applicable).
   - Parents of both parties are notified as early as possible.
3. **Risk Assessment**
   - Assess if the incident poses a safeguarding concern.
   - Determine if external agencies need to be involved (e.g., police, counsellors).

Incident Recording

- All confirmed incidents of bullying are logged in the school's digital reporting system CPOMS
- The student is identified as "perpetrator" or "victim" as part of trend analysis and follow-up care.

Action plan

Supporting the Victim	**Supporting the Perpetrator**

1. **Wellbeing Assessment**
    o Offer the student a private debrief session with a school counsellor.
    o Conduct a safety and wellbeing check-in using a student-friendly assessment tool.
	1. **Initial Behaviour Review**
	    o Identify root causes: family, social, emotional, or academic factors.
	    o Evaluate empathy, impulse control, and relationships.

2. **Parental Engagement**
    o Meet with parents to discuss concerns, emotional impact, and safety measures.
    o Agree on a home-school support plan.
	2. **Behaviour Intervention Plan**
	    o Counselling sessions with behavioural targets and social skill-building.
	    o Reflective tasks: apology letters, journaling, or participation in social awareness workshops.

3. **Pastoral Plan**
    o Assign a staff mentor or peer mentor.
    o Develop a self-esteem and empowerment action plan with the revelant support staff member
    o Monitor for signs of re-traumatization.
	3. **Parental Meeting**
	    o Discuss expectations, consequences, and joint strategies for behaviour change.
	    o Collaborate on consistent home consequences and praise for improvements.

4. Restorative Opportunities ○ Offer restorative practices if appropriate and the victim agrees. ○ Student may opt-out without penalty.	4. **Sanctions** ○ Depending on severity, responses may include: ▪ Loss of privileges ▪ Behaviour contracts ▪ Temporary suspension ▪ Permanent exclusion (for repeated or severe incidents)
5. Ongoing Monitoring ○ Weekly check-ins for a minimum of four weeks post-incident. ○	5. **Restorative Action** ○ Encourage ownership of actions. ○ Student may participate in peer support or anti-bullying workshops once rehabilitated.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Bi-termly review of bullying trends by the Pastoral/Wellbeing Team.
- Annual student wellbeing survey with bullying-related questions.
- Regular audits of reporting systems and pastoral interventions.
- Anonymous staff/student/parent feedback used to enhance policy.

School-wide initiatives

- Annual Anti-Bullying Week
- Student-led Inclusion Forums with Wellbeing Ambassadors
- Safe Spaces across campus

- Peer Friendship Circles

POLICY REVIEW

Bullying prevention is a cornerstone of effective, ethical, and inclusive education. It supports the mission of Raha International School to develop compassionate global citizens, committed to respect, justice, and lifelong learning. It upholds the rights of every child to learn in a safe, inclusive environment free from fear or prejudice.

A school's approach to bullying is a reflection of its values. By embedding prevention in our culture, curriculum, leadership, and daily interactions, we do more than eliminate harm—we empower students to lead with empathy, engage with difference, and stand up for what is right.

The success of bullying prevention depends on the collaboration of all stakeholders: students, staff, families, and community partners. Together, we can build a school environment where every child feels safe, supported, and inspired to thrive.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Pastoral and Wellbeing Team, with input from staff, students, and parents to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

Revision Log

Date	Changes	Reviewed By