



MAS Anti – Bulling Policy 25-26

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OVERVIEW

Al Maaref American school (MAS) believes that students in the school community should be learning in a supportive, caring, and safe environment without fear of intimidation or being bullied.

Everyone in school must report bullying whether it happens to themselves or another person.

MAS promotes a culture in which students are not afraid to report bullying, encouraging the reporting of incidents so that interventions can be made.

Bullying issues form a key part of the school's Wellbeing Assembly along with zoom sessions led to each grade throughout the term. The UAE Moral Education Program also supports MAS's Anti-Bullying Campaign.

The Dubai Health Authority spends a day each year conducting anti-bullying workshops with students and parents.

At MAS students have:

- To feel safe
- To learn

- To be respected

They also have the following responsibilities:

- To appreciate self
- To be respectful
- To use common sense
- To be supportive towards others

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is any behavior which hurts, injures, threatens, or frightens. 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.
- Sexist remarks
- Gossiping and spreading rumors
- Exclusion, deliberately ignoring someone and encouraging others to do the same.
- Insulting someone
- Threatening or intimidating behavior
- Taking and damaging property
- Offensive telephone calls, emails, and text messages to others

WHAT IS CYBER BULLYING?

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

SPECIAL CONCERNS

Cyber bullying has unique concerns in that it can be:

Persistent – Digital devices offer an ability to immediately and continuously communicate 24 hours a day, so it can be difficult for children to experience cyber bullying to find relief.

Permanent – Most information communicated electronically is permanent and public, if not reported and removed. A negative online reputation, including for those who bully, can impact university admissions, employment, and other areas off life.

Hard to Notice – Because teachers and parents may not overhear or see cyberbullying taking place, it is harder to recognize.

Breaking the Cybercrime Law - Student need to be aware that any incidences of cyber bullying which contravene the Federal Law of the U.A.E. may be subject immediately to

Permanent Exclusion.

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

The most usual places where cyber bullying occur are:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter.
- 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 courses are built into the Digital Skills programmed along with the Wellbeing and Enrichment Days. The topic is explored further by inviting outside experts to school to address students and teachers and parent forums.

ACTIONS FOR THOSE BEING BULLIED. WHO CAN YOU TURN TO IF YOU ARE BULLIED?

- Your parents
- Your close friends
- Your class teacher
- Your Head of Pastoral Care
- Any member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Any teacher with whom you feel you have a relationship of trust.
- The school Nurse and office staff

What can you do if you are bullied?

- Tell the bully to stop. Make it clear that the behavior is unwelcome and hurtful.

- Seek help. Talk to someone you trust.
- Report it. AMPS do 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 act, 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.

PREVENTING BULLYING.

What can you do to prevent bullying?

- Try to build a relaxed atmosphere in school for everybody.
- Do not follow friends when you disagree with what they are doing.
- Be aware of the school's anti bullying policy and give it your full support.

Sometimes bullies exclude people. If you are popular and have a positive peer group, including the victim in your activities.

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ASSURANCES ABOUT BULLYING.

What assurances can the school provide on bullying?

- We take a zero-tolerance stance.
- We always expect a high standard of behavior.
- We aim to provide a safe and caring environment for everybody.
- We have a policy for detecting, preventing, and dealing with bullying.
- We cover bullying issues in our Wellbeing sessions.

- We have a pastoral care system that provides genuine support to students.

What assurances can the teachers provide on bullying?

- If you have been bullied, you are not to blame.
- Everyone is entitled to enjoy school.
- Staying silent solves nothing.
- “We are here to help!”

WARNING

If a student is beginning to behave in a manner which could develop into or be interpreted as bullying, wherever possible a warning will be given. In this way it is hoped that many Potentially serious situations will never materialize. 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.

Level 2

Where, after due investigations, the school is satisfied that bullying has occurred, it will be explained to the bully why his/her behavior is unacceptable, and positive strategies will be pursued to raise his self-esteem and protect the victim. The bully’s parents will be informed by letter. Removal from stage 1 may be possible only when the following criteria have been met:

- There is no evidence that the student has continued to use bullying behaviors in any form.
- There is evidence of the positive support of the anti-bullying policy in the new behaviors that the student is exhibiting.

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

Level 3 (SLT)

If the bullying continues, arrangements will be made to minimize 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. It will not be possible to be removed from Stage 2 or any subsequent stage. It is envisaged that in most circumstances these two stages will be sufficient.

Level 4 (Internal/External Exclusion)

Where there is no improvement in bullying, the bully will be excluded (suspended) from the school for at least a week. This may be internal or external depending on the case's severity and prior history of such behavior.

Level 4 (Permanent Exclusion)

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

MAS Administration