

ELC International Schools



Anti-Bullying Policy

Year 2019/2020

Vision Statement

Cultivating creativity, valuing difference, empowering minds, striving to build a global community.

Mission Statement

Enriching minds through purposeful reflection, critical thinking and creativity.

Learning to wonder, inquire and question through project, expressive languages and engaging academics.

Celebrating individuality, culture and diversity through the image of the child.

GUIDELINE DETAILS

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The Policy

This policy relates to bullying in all its forms, to work towards preventing any bullying by either an adult or a child to a child and to deal with bullying when it occurs. This policy is not intended to cover adult on adult bullying as that is covered in a separate policy. How to protect your child from cyber bullying will be covered in the e-safety policy.

As a school we believe that bullying is wrong in any form and in any place; in the school, in the home, in our community and in society at large and that we all need to continue to develop the skills to deal with it.

It is recognized now that bullying in schools is not about forms of violence exclusive to the school, it is about the broader social context in which children are brought up: where they and family members are exposed to violent stimuli, insecurity, selfishness and lack of respect for anyone competing for the same goals or representing different values. Society does reward the individuals' survival, competitiveness and differentiation and it is therefore very important as a whole community to adopt collective values and co-operation in the common interest.

Legislation and Bullying

Bullying and cyber bullying compromise children's rights to freedom from violence, to protection from discrimination, to an inclusive and relevant education and the highest attainable standard of health, to the right to be heard and have their best interests regarded as a primary consideration in all decisions affecting their lives. These are rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is in force in virtually all countries around the world.

Thailand has cyber bullying laws that prohibit Internet bullying, Facebook bullying, and bullying using other social media. Cyber-bullying is a crime, with the possibility of the prosecution of a complaint under the Child Protection Act and/or the Computer Crime Act if defamation is involved. Where other forms of bullying are reported the Child Protection Act of 2003 is appropriate for some actions. Other laws are applied where there are cases that involve criminal acts.

Statements

At ELC all children have the right to feel safe and emotionally secure, be able to learn, feel respected no matter their age, length of time at ELC, their personal identity or abilities and differences. This can be achieved through the creation and sustaining of a warm, positive and nurturing environment, continuous educators training, close, honest and respectful communication with parents and other community members, the use of considered strategies, tools and materials, maintaining a climate of respect with all members of this community and through the use of an appropriate curriculum, that creates student empowerment.

ELC is committed to a policy of inclusion, equality and justice for all members of the community. Having a safe place for all our children to learn and play in a relaxed and secure environment is key. No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying and we believe that where bullying is challenged effectively students will know that incidents will be addressed, that their voice will be heard, that they can be an active part of the problem solving process and that we care as a school.

Bullying is considered anti-social and at ELC we believe that bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated; we take any incidents seriously. It is our responsibility as a school and as a community, to ensure that there is a proactive approach to preventing bullying. Students, parents, educators, other staff and community members have the right to feel safe and respected; they also carry the responsibility to be accountable for their personal actions.

In enriching minds through purposeful reflection, critical thinking and creativity we also enrich minds to develop pro-social emotional thinking and problem solving, developing leadership qualities that contribute to a wider and global community.

Bullies also need help and we believe at ELC that a positive ethos, with active and appropriate support systems contributes to an emotionally safe environment. We as a school want members of our community to fully understand that students who are bullying others have reasons for their behaviour, may be developing their own skills and will need our guidance, understanding and support to change their behaviour.

At ELC we believe that because of the societal aspects of bullying our focus should be on cultivating a common set of core values, a strong sense of community where all can recognise the values and strengths of a peaceful coexistence.

ELC aims to recruit staff who provide positive role models to the community, who have an awareness of how important their actions are on others and who have the leadership skills to empower others.

Aims of the Policy

- All governors, educators, non-teaching staff, students, parents and carers should understand what bullying is
- The above stakeholders should know what the school policy is, what to do if bullying is reported, who to report to and how to follow the guidelines within the policy
- That all will understand how important it is to create an environment where it is a positive, responsible and commendable action to speak up. The 'victim' should feel that they have been heard and empowered and the 'bully' should receive appropriate support without any negativity from within the community
- That all in the community learn about 'bystander responsibility' and know how to intervene while being safe and realise that they must report bullying immediately
- To ensure that all members of the school community feel responsible for combating bullying
- To inform all that bullying needs to be seen in the broader context of society and that the ethos of the school and the standards of behaviour expected within the community is a critical factor
- To agree on our core values as a community

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a form of emotional or physical abuse that has three defining characteristics:

1. Deliberate – a bully's intention is to hurt someone
2. Repeated – the behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time
3. Power Imbalanced – a bully chooses victims he or she perceives as vulnerable

These three aspects must be included for a behavior to be labeled bullying.

Bullying involves one or more people repeatedly and deliberately doing things to make another person upset, afraid or hurt. A person or a group of people might feel that they have more power than someone

else and use hurtful words or actions to bully them. Bullying is not just ‘playing around’ – it can really affect the child’s or person’s feelings and emotions.

Bullying can take place just about anywhere, by adults and/or peers, in the classroom or school campus, on the way to and from school, either on the school bus, or other forms of transport, online, by phone, at home or anywhere in the community. It can be related to just about anything and can come in many forms. For example, bullying can include physical, verbal and social aggression and it can be either face-to-face or online (cyber bullying).

Cyber bullying uses electronic types of communication (e.g., text messages, email and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram or YouTube). Unlike face to face bullying, cyber bullying can go on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so people don’t get a rest from it. Bullying can also be hidden or ‘covert’ (e.g., deliberately excluding others, sending or posting pictures, or spreading rumours about someone behind their back).

Bullying can be doing harm to another through aggressive verbal, physical acts, through attempts to humiliate, harass, intimidate, make threats or provoke fear in others. It can also be about sexual coercion.

Spreading rumours, name-calling, excluding others and embarrassing them are all forms of social bullying that can cause serious and lasting harm. Relational bullies work to damage a victim’s social status and relationships. Bullies who practice relational bullying often do it to increase their own social standing or to control others. As a general rule it is important to ensure that children and adults are aware that any name calling is not acceptable, even if intended as a joke. It is also appropriate to inform parents of that fact where they have given their child a nick-name which in another culture can be seen as derogatory. In Thailand it is common for children to have nicknames, they are usually not related to the first or last names, they are just a made-up name given to a person usually by their parents. While first names are sometimes given for religious reasons and usually contain well-meaning words, they can at times be names that have a different meaning in a different culture.

Bullying can also involve targeting an individual because of characteristics that are unique to their identity, for example their race, skin colour or national identity, their gender or gender identity, their religion, beliefs or perceived beliefs, their ability to learn, their physical appearance or abilities, their sexual preferences or their challenges if they have disabilities. Bullying can involve targeting an individual because they are perceived as different to the group, it includes excluding individuals from conversations, activities or groups.

Here at ELC, as a learning community we celebrate individuality, culture and diversity through the image of the child.

Note to the Victim of Bullying

“It’s important to remember that bullying is not okay, it is not simply ‘a normal part of growing up’, and help is always available to make things better. If you are having problems with bullying, seeking support is a good way to help you to overcome the negative effects of bullying and find ways to get the bullying to stop.

Anyone who has experienced bullying knows how upsetting it is. You may feel alone, unsafe, afraid, stressed, humiliated, angry, ashamed and rejected. Often you can feel that there is no escape and may do things to ‘fit in’, like changing your appearance or acting differently. Sometimes you might want to hurt others, or yourself, because of it. Bullying can be traumatic, especially when carried out by friends or peers, as these relationships are so important in a young person’s life.”

Headspace 2018

When is it not bullying?

When it is a one off incident, a disagreement or an argument, when the balance of power is equal; this would not be considered bullying unless the incident is significant.

How do we know a child is being bullied?

- The child directly informs a parent or other member of the school community
- There are changes in mood or personality (loses confidence, becomes withdrawn, or anxious, has nightmares, feels ill in the mornings, noticeable changes in school performance are observed, becomes aggressive themselves, cries easily or is frightened to say what's wrong)
- A change in behaviour or routine; doesn't want to go to school, is scared of going on the bus or other form of transport, gets distressed when near a particular peer or adult, reacts after using a digital device and suddenly avoids certain groups of children
- Obvious physical signs; has damaged clothing, property, possessions go missing, there are unexplained cuts or bruises, individual may stop eating, or asks for money to pay the bully and gives excuses for any of the above

Standards of Behaviour

All staff must respect children's rights and promote a participatory culture of peace and respect in school.

All staff must follow a code of conduct for behaviour that they apply to the student, but also apply equally to colleagues, administrators and all members of the community.

Parents and staff have guidelines through the staff and parent handbooks and through regular feedback provided through frequent school communications.

Our home school agreement for parents outlines clearly what we expect when we set out to create and maintain a peaceful and caring community.

Regular staff training and professional development opportunities are provided to support the knowledge skills, aptitude and attitude that promotes students success and achievement in a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment.

The use of a range of practices to achieve the peaceful resolution of conflicts is an integral part of the school culture. In school we use the responsive classroom approach and have regular training throughout the year with educators. In the past two years we have extended this to parents to include 'responsive parenting' workshops.

Every member of the larger community is expected to share in the ethos and value system of the school and adhere to the rules and codes of conduct. All members of the community are encouraged to report and address any inappropriate standards of behaviour quickly and efficiently. When communicating our values and ethos we will be respectful yet stay firm on what we believe is needed to prevent any child or member of our community from feeling isolated, bullied or from suffering harm in any way.

The students should all know what to do when they see any incidents of bullying. Any student who feels that they are being subject to any behaviour that does not feel right and makes them feel regularly and repeatedly excluded, made to feel that being different has negative connotations, is being treated in a way that displays a power imbalance that is impacting their self esteem, is getting bullied in any way should feel supported by all staff and know they can talk to an educator they see regularly or a member of the leadership team. Adults in our community including staff should also feel they will get support through the leadership team.

Preventative Action

- Effective, rigorous, recruitment procedures to increase the potential of recruiting staff who will have shared value systems
- Communicating our ethos effectively to parents and the community at large. Increasing awareness that our own behaviour, how we engage in our own relationships and the models that we provide for our children are critical in how they may act with others
- Staff abiding by the school behavioural management guidelines document and asking for help where they need it
- Students learning from the beginning of school that it is important to respect each other and follow the rules of the setting
- Cooperation and partnership between school and home
- The whole school wide responsive classroom approach which is a student-centered, social and emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline, comprised of a set of research, and evidence-based practices designed to create safe, engaging classrooms and school communities for both students and teachers
- The Ontario Physical and Health Education Curriculum Year 1 to 6 and the Ontario full day kindergarten curriculum (one of four frames is regulation and wellbeing), an inclusive curriculum that helps students learn the skills and knowledge they need to lead healthy, active lives and make healthy and safe choices
- All classes from K1 onwards are taught in an age appropriate way that having a growth mindset is important for learning. In kindergarten, they learn that you can make your brain grow and through the years they learn further about the value of persistence. This is based on years of research that the mindset is malleable and we can learn from our mistakes. This can prevent a student from becoming disengaged. It also is applied to the social context where we can solve our problems best when we work together and can be flexible, learning from our mistakes. The understanding that hard work pays off enables children to build resilience a known preventative element in the preventative process
- In Student Services and Wellbeing the following resources are available;
 1. The Second Step Curriculum (explicit, evidence based curriculum)
 2. The Zones of Regulation (self-regulation and control)
 3. The social behaviour mapping Michelle Garcia Winner (expected and unexpected behaviours...)
- There are *positive behaviour response teams* in place in the school, who will advocate for school wide procedures and for prompt and appropriate action when a concern is raised. These teams will

also be aware of the larger societal and community influences and will also be aware of the vulnerability of certain populations to being bullied or acting as the bully

- In Kindergarten Jennifer Horne leads the *positive behaviour response team* and in year 1-6 Lea Mai leads the team. The teams look at providing prevention measures, implementing the action plan and chairing the response team when a bullying or behavioural incident has occurred. Where there is a safeguarding or child protection matter the Child Protection Officers, Alison Owen and Sarah Stratton will be coordinating the response

Bully Action Plan

Step 1: Where a bullying incident is observed quickly report it to Jennifer Horne or Lea Mai.

Step 2: Where bullying is suspected it should be reported to the classroom teacher in writing and Jennifer and Lea should be copied in.

Step 3: 'The Positive Behavioural Response Team' will take action to ensure that there is appropriate support for the student being bullied. They will speak with anyone who has witnessed the bullying, or speak with other staff, community members as needed. Everyone involved should make notes identifying themselves as the author and dating each entry. Where there is cyber bullying screenshots can be an important record. All available resources will be used to identify the person, child (ren) responsible.

Step 4: The school will ensure that parents/custodial guardians are kept informed and that measures have been taken to ensure that the bullying has stopped.

Step 5: There will be decisions made and action taken regarding the child who is behaving inappropriately and his/her family will be kept involved and informed. Where an adult has been involved there is a procedure for employees and non-employees that will be initiated.

Step 6: Follow up support will be provided for the victim of bullying and for any children affected by it.

Step 7: The Positive Behavioural Response Team will look at how the incident could potentially have been prevented and consider reflection, training, further measures as required.

Support for the student who has been bullied

Below are a list of suggested actions; each situation will be managed on an individual basis.

- Reassurance to the student that everything is being done or will be done to prevent any continuation of the bullying and that it was the right thing to do to tell
- Providing that time and appropriate place for them to discuss it with the behaviour response team leader or person they identify as feeling most comfortable with
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence, looking at ways to build resilience where that has been the reason for targeting that individual; recommending and arranging for the provision of pastoral care
- Engaging parents in any ongoing solutions

- Providing ongoing support, recommendations for the teacher and others working with the child, or recommending counseling depending on the individual situation.
- Referring out to specialist providers where needed

Support and other action for the student who is carrying out the bullying

- Discussing what has happened, identifying the behaviour that is of concern, the need to change and what will happen next
- Informing parents/custodial guardians of the behaviour and engaging their support in the process of changing behavior
- Providing ongoing education and support as needed around their behaviour and looking at the function of that behaviour and considering any special circumstances within their family and immediate community
- Where there is online content, requiring that it be removed and where there is a serious case reporting to the service provider and to the authorities (this is particularly where the adult is a bully, but can also happen with a child)
- At ELC, through the responsive classroom approach logical consequences are implemented as a first line before sanctions; the ability of the child to adapt and change their behaviour will inform the decisions of the positive behaviour response team
- Application of sanctions as approved by the *positive behavioural response team*. This can include temporary removal from the group, short term removal of privileges, confiscating an inappropriate item, highly supervised online access by parents and school. The focus has to be on understanding the behaviour and how to address it to effect change rather than on punitive measures
- Where there has been an escalation of behaviour, a serious incident or repeated bullying the student can be temporarily suspended to get the help they need, for example psychological support, family therapy, behavioural coaching
- Referrals to external providers and statutory authorities may also be required where school measures may not be sufficient

What happens if there is no direct evidence of Bullying?

It is important to be careful and considerate in gathering data, there may be reporting where upon follow up it is unclear what has transpired. This may mean that the balance of power is equal or it can also mean that the 'potential bully' is denying their involvement and there are no witnesses. All parties will be informed in this situation, there will be discussions to ensure there is an agreement on the expected and acceptable behaviour, closer supervision and monitoring would occur for a specified period with a follow up discussion at the set time and earlier where needed.

What Can the Child Do?

- Tell someone.....**report it in all cases, know that silence is not helpful**
- Learn how to be resilient and appropriately assertive through regular discussions, role play, exposure to models at home and at school

- Learn what it means if someone you know is being bullied and stand up for them, know how you can stand up to a bully, yet stay safe
- Learn how to challenge language which can be seen as fun but really demonstrates discrimination, lack of respect and exclusion
- Celebrate the success and achievements of their peers, develop self-esteem, confidence and social skills
- Know what bullying looks like and what to do if they experience it, see it or feel tempted to do it. In becoming more aware know it is not okay to bully or to stand silent when you see another child is being bullied

What will the Leadership Team Do?

- Will seek out good practise models, keep up with the current research and make sure that prevention action is taken
- Monitor and review our anti-bullying policy and practise on a regular basis
- Support staff to promote positive relationships and refine selection procedures to recruit staff on their core values
- Recognise that bullying is not always seen, that prevention is key and that action needs to be timely and effective
- Create a climate where positive behaviour management is the norm, where training is ongoing, where the messaging is clear and consistent
- Understand that some children are more vulnerable than others and ensure resources are available and advocate for the individual
- Set up agreements and codes of conduct and ensure all members of the community know that any forms of power imbalance, discrimination, exploitation, exclusion and/or violence physical, emotional, sexual, relational will not be tolerated
- Intervene by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour promptly and appropriately
- Refer to external agencies and report to statutory authorities when needed

What can Parents do?

- Model positive parenting; know that your child is more likely to follow what you do than what you say, therefore look at how you behave and act, how you speak to others, how you speak about others in front of your child. Demonstrate positive problem solving, if you get angry or anxious easily your child may follow your lead
- Ensure that you are using appropriate approaches to disciplining your child that are well researched and effective. If you try to hold control and power over your child you are teaching your child that holding power over others is important. If however you also let your child do whatever they want without providing boundaries your child will learn that they do not need to respect others or follow rules
- Teach your child social skills, provide positive and specific feedback when pro-social behaviour is demonstrated. This means encouraging your child to be caring with others, it also means guiding them to learn how can they stick up for themselves in an appropriate way .

- Coach your child and yourself using positive self talk and developing a healthy self-esteem
- Teach your child to learn from their mistakes and understand why a fixed mindset despite average or high intellect, strong talents and abilities can affect their child's ability to learn efficiently and their ability to collaborate well with others
- Role-play with your child ways they can control their responses with others, how to regulate these responses yet be assertive when necessary. Research shows that bullies often start with verbal harassment. Teach your child that if they see bullying of another child that they engage the other children to support the victim

Setting the Core Values

We would like to start this conversation with the families and the broader community that connects with ELC, therefore the following values that are currently considered important are listed below and are open for discussion in this coming year.

- Respect and what that means
- Inclusion as a basic right
- Fairness for all
- Justice and reasonable Action

This early conversation can also include bystander awareness and what that means in our adult world and how that impacts bullying in our children's lives.

Resources

Children's books:

The Pout-Pout Fish and the Bully-Bully Shark by Deborah Diesen (ages 3-8years)

The Too Small Elephant by Christine Lauren Callahan (3-8 years)

Bernie the Bull by J.G. Serls (ages 4-8 years)

Stick and Stone by Beth Ferry (ages 4-8 years)

Don't blame Hazel by R.G. Frazia (age 5-10 years)

Smitty tackles bullying by Wade Smith (ages 5-10years)

Chisom the Champ by Dr. Irene Okoronkwo-Obika (ages 5-10 years)

Cyberbullies beware by Lisa Fleming (ages 6-18 years)

Websites:

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/>

<https://www.prevnet.ca/resources/websites>

<http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/teaching-students-to-prevent-bullying.html>

<http://www.stopabully.ca/teacher-resources.html>

<https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/celebrating-difference-schools/primary-school-pack>