

P O L I C Y	Owner	Principal
ANTI-BULLYING	ID (Version)	Du/5.1.4(v2)
	Published	01/09/2024
	Valid Until	01/09/2025

POLICY STATEMENT

The Arbor School (“Arbor”, “we”, “the school”) believes that all students under our care have a right to a safe, healthy, and caring environment where mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance are highly promoted. Diversity is not only celebrated but embraced, relationships are based on respect and support, and bullying of any type is deemed unacceptable. We are therefore committed to ensuring that bullying is actively prevented across the school, students feel encouraged and supported to talk with any member of staff if they have a concern, and bullying cases – if any – are promptly and effectively addressed.

APPLICATION

1. BULLYING

Not every type of unkindness can be considered bullying. Children occasionally may do or say something that is hurtful, and whilst it is important to address it, it may not constitute bullying. For a behaviour by an individual or group to be considered bullying, it should involve the following elements:

- Repeated instances over time;
- Intention of hurting another individual or group either physically or emotionally; and
- Imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s), who usually feel(s) helpless to respond.

Bullying can manifest itself in several ways, including (but not limited to):

- **Physical Bullying:** Hitting, punching, kicking, stealing, or damaging someone’s property.
- **Verbal Bullying:** Name-calling, putdowns, mocking, labelling, and threatening.
- **Social Bullying:** Ignoring or leaving someone out intentionally, excluding someone from a group, or spreading rumours.
- **Sexual / Sexist Bullying:** Sexual jokes, comments, gestures, spreading sexual rumours, or sharing inappropriate images.
- **Bullying of Students of Determination:** Behaving or speaking in a way that marginalises or discriminates against students with SEND.
- **Psychological Bullying:** Stalking, intimidation, or manipulating someone into doubting their experiences.
- **Cyberbullying:** Harassment through mobile phones, social media, email, text messages, or the internet.

Bullying can take place at school, on the way to and from school, or in and around students' homes. Wherever it occurs, it is a serious matter that must be promptly addressed.

Bullying impacts everyone – those who are bullied, those who bully, and those who witness bullying. Early intervention is crucial to prevent further harm.

2. PREVENTION

2.1. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

We use the following methods to help prevent bullying. These activities may form part of the school’s MSC, Positive Education and Pastoral Programme, and / or can be dealt with during circle time,

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regular weekly sessions, and regular school and class assemblies. They may also be handled on an individual basis as follows:

- Reinforcing the Behaviour for Learning Policy and Procedures to create a consistent culture of respect and responsibility.
- Developing student leadership through peer mentoring, student-led councils, ambassador groups, and buddies.
- Promoting positive behaviour through praise and appropriate rewards.
- Embedding anti-bullying education in curriculum subjects, including literature, historical events, and current affairs.
- Using creative methods such as writing, storytelling, drawing, and role-play activities to explore anti-bullying strategies.
- Celebrating key awareness events such as Children’s Mental Health Week, Kindness or Anti-Bullying Week and e-safety/digital citizenship sessions.
- Ensuring cyber-safety by implementing responsible use agreements, abiding by the E-Safety (Digital and Online) Safety Procedure, and addressing digital misconduct.
- Providing student workshops on bullying prevention, facilitated by internal and external experts.
- Applying restorative practices to build a culture of mutual respect and conflict resolution.

What can our students do if they are being bullied?

- The student should understand that they do not deserve to be bullied.
- They should be proud of being different; individuality is a good thing. There is no excuse for bullying.
- If a student is worried or feels unsafe, they should talk to someone about it.
- They can try being assertive by saying ‘NO’ firmly and walking confidently, even if they don’t feel that way inside.
- If a student is being bullied, they should provide clear and accurate evidence of what happened, where it happened, and when it happened. For example, they can keep screenshots of online bullying.
- They should tell a trusted adult or teacher, or seek support from the counsellor. Teachers and staff will take them seriously and are experienced in addressing bullying in a way that will stop it without making things worse.
- If they cannot find a teacher, they should tell another student or staff member. Everyone in the school is there to support them, and they may also choose to speak to a member of the Student Council or a Mental Health First Aider in Secondary.

What can our students do if they see bullying going on?

- Students should take action when someone is being bullied or is in distress. Simply watching and doing nothing can appear as though they support the bully and may make the victim feel even more unhappy and isolated.
- They should inform an adult immediately, as teachers have ways of addressing bullying without causing trouble for those who report it.

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- Students should be supportive and sympathetic. If they are unsure how to help someone, they should speak to a trusted adult for guidance.

Remember: Silence is the bully’s best weapon

2.2. STAFF AWARENESS AND TRAINING

During their induction to the school, all staff will receive training on recognising bullying, investigating allegations, and restorative practices. Additional training is also carried out throughout the year to introduce whole school initiatives (i.e. “Anti-Bullying Week”). In addition, awareness is raised through Continual Professional Development sessions for teaching and non-teaching staff, staff meetings and informal discussions.

Crucial to nurturing good relations, staff members are expected to act as behaviour role models and treat students respectfully and appropriately. This is more formally embedded via tutor periods, and by successes being celebrated.

Students identified as students of determination are particularly susceptible to bullying and may be more sensitive to teasing and name calling. Teachers must be aware of this and actively promote inclusion and equal opportunities with classwork and particularly in the playground/social areas.

In line with the school’s *Behaviour for Learning Policy and Procedures*, staff members are required to:

- Be vigilant by observing our children in their play, social time and in the classroom and corridors.
- Minimise the opportunities for bullying by supervising and monitoring play/break times and transitions.
- Use any learning opportunities for talking about ways of behaving towards one another.
- Promote the school values, ensuring everyone in the Arbor community is respectful and responsible.
- Make sure that students are aware of this policy, including the sections on what to do if you are bullied or have witnessed bullying.
- Keep parents informed of incidents which may be perceived as bullying.

2.3. PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

The school recognises that preventing bullying requires a collaborative effort from the entire school community and will, therefore, ensure that parents are informed about their children’s behaviour and attitudes on a regular basis, invited to participate in relevant school activities / assemblies, and be provided with relevant information about bullying so that they are well-placed to quickly identify the signs.

The safe and acceptable use of devices and the internet outside of school hours is the responsibility of parents / carers, who are recommended to:

- Be alert to children becoming upset or secretive, or changing relationships with friends, after using the internet / devices;

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- Be aware that a child may be as likely to be a bully as to be a target; and
- Speak with their children and understand how they are using the internet / devices.

What can our parents do if they are worried that their child may be being bullied?

- Watch for signs of distress or changes of behaviour in your children. For instance, they could be unwilling to attend school or have missing equipment.
- Take an interest in your child’s social life. Discuss friendships, how lunchtime is spent, and the journey to and from school.
- Inform your child’s teacher or tutor immediately if you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour. Your complaint will be taken seriously and actions will be taken to prevent and stop bullying. We promise an immediate response.
- Don’t encourage your child to retaliate, this often makes matters worse.
- Make sure your child knows there is nothing wrong with them. It is not their fault.
- Monitor your child’s use of the Internet, chat rooms and mobile phones. Ensure that you have parental controls in place to protect your child from inappropriate images or websites.

3. INTERVENTION

3.1. REPORTING

Arbor has an effective reporting system that ensures all members of the school community—teachers, staff, students, and parents—can report any bullying incidents, in line with the school’s Behaviour for Learning Policy and Procedures. By using this system, potential future incidents can be prevented, and children can be protected. Students who experience bullying or witness others being bullied are encouraged to speak up, whether the incident occurs inside or outside of school, ideally before the situation escalates. They may confide in any trusted adult in the school, including their class teacher or tutor, a pastoral lead, or the Principal.

Students who hold leadership roles, including student ambassadors and peer mentors, receive training on how to support their peers and respond appropriately to reports of bullying. Additionally, the Academic and School Clinic staff are equipped to guide students in addressing bullying concerns.

Parents and staff also play a crucial role in identifying and reporting bullying. If anyone, including bystanders, observes bullying, they should report it immediately, as early intervention is often essential in preventing situations from escalating.

3.2. DEALING WITH REPORTED CASES

The school has developed the following key principles to manage reported cases of bullying:

- All staff are expected to deal sympathetically with minimum delay once an incident is reported, with students who are the victims of (alleged) bullying;
- Students who are alleged to be perpetrators of bullying will always be interviewed formally by a senior member of staff and with a witness. Their version of events will be listened to and noted in writing;

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- Where incidents of cyberbullying are reported, even if it is outside of school hours, the school will intervene and investigate and deal with the alleged incident;
- Consequences, in line with the school’s *Behaviour for Learning Policy and Procedures*, will be taken where necessary. Such action may include letters or meetings with parents, internal or external suspension, or exclusion from school. All exclusions will be subject to Knowledge and Human Development Authority (“KHDA”) consultation;
- All disciplinary measures must be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably;
- Where possible the school will apply restorative practices and positive discipline, taking sensitive action in order to ensure that relationships are restored wherever possible.

Restorative practices are a set of diverse ideas and approaches used to build healthy communities, repair harm and restore relationships. These practices place emphasis on addressing harm and building community and relationships, rather than simply administering punishment. The school will ensure to implement these practices in order to restore broken relationships and will provide support to those students who may have suffered bullying in any form. Further information and guidelines on Arbor’s approach to restorative practices are available in the school’s *Behaviour for Learning Policy and Procedure*.

3.3. FOLLOWING-UP

It is important that victims of bullying feel they are receiving support and feel safe and comfortable. It is also important that the suspected bullies have had a fair hearing. The pastoral team will follow-up each case to ascertain if there have been any consequences or re-occurrences.

In extreme cases of ongoing bullying by one or more perpetrators, where interventions and action plans have been unsuccessful, the school reserves the right to exclude students or block re-registration in order to maintain a safe and healthy environment, in line with the school’s *Behaviour for Learning Policy and Procedures*.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Document Title	ID / Reference No.
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	DU/5.1.1 (v5)
Safeguarding and child protection Procedure	DU/5.1.1.1
Child-on-Child Abuse Procedure	DU/5.1.1.2
E-Safety (Digital and Online) Safety Procedure	DU/5.1.1.3
Behaviour for Learning Procedure: Primary	DU/5.1.2.1 (v4)
Behaviour for Learning Procedure: Secondary	DU/5.1.2.2 (v3)
Race Relations Amendment Act (2000)	External
Equality Act (2010)	External
Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)	External
Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)	External
Federal Law No. 3 on Child Rights (“Wadeema Law”, 2016)	External

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ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Abbreviation / Term	Description / Definition
KHDA	Knowledge and Human Development Authority