

ESK Anti-bullying policy

ESK is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe school for all pupils so that they are able to learn in a safe and secure environment. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated from anyone. If bullying does occur, pupils can speak to staff and parents knowing that any incident will be dealt with promptly and effectively. All staff will respond immediately and sympathetically to pupils involved and proper procedures will be followed to help the bullied and the bully. We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and pupils who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is the intentional, repetitive or persistent hurting, frightening or threatening of one person by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can take many forms and be verbal or physical, direct or indirect, for example when someone is excluded from a social group or when malicious text messages are sent. Anyone can be bullied, and people can both bully and be bullied. It can happen in or out of school. Bullying is mean and results in worry, fear, pain and distress to the victim/s.

Bullying can be:

Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, deliberately damaging property, threatening gestures), ridicule, humiliation, racial taunts, graffiti, gestures comments on physical appearance, making fun of nationality, culture, social status or religious beliefs.

- Verbal: name-calling, malicious sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, making rude remarks, making fun of someone
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, throwing objects, biting, spitting, punching or any other forms of violence, taking or hiding someone's things
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive or sexist comments, homophobic because of/or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Online/cyber: setting up 'hate Websites', sending offensive text messages, e-mails and abusing the victims via their mobile phones or social networks
- Any unfavourable or negative comments, gestures or actions made to someone relating to their disability or special educational needs.

Anti-bullying policy objectives:

- To inform, sensitise and mobilise all members of school community about “bullying” and what to do in order to prevent or to deal with it.
- To establish clear, understandable and effective procedures for reporting bullying and procedures to be followed by everyone concerned.
- To communicate these procedures effectively to everyone so that they can be followed by all concerned.
- To establish a clear, understandable and effective intervention plan in case it is needed.
- To ensure that everyone’s right to work in a safe and happy school environment is preserved.

The school environment

All adults within the school environment are in a position of authority and are expected to act as positive role models. They are actively involved in providing a comfortable school environment for the pupils. Firm limits are set for unacceptable behaviour and when rules are broken there must be clear, non-physical and non-hostile negative consequences.

Prevention:

In order to prevent bullying we need to be aware that we belong to a school community made up of people from different nationalities, cultures religions and social backgrounds. We must value these differences and be unbiased by prejudice. The school climate must reflect the shared basic values of tolerance and respect that should emanate from all school activities. Prevention is a key aspect of our anti- bullying policy. Therefore whole school initiatives and proactive teaching strategies will be used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing the opportunities for bullying to occur. These can include:

- Informing parents about the anti-bullying policy. Informing parents immediately of any amendments or up-dates that are made subsequent to the publication of current version. Ensuring that all parents are given an up-to-date version in one of the three vehicular languages and formally request that they read the document carefully.
- Presentation of anti bullying policy by the class teachers and the deputy directors to the pupils. Each class agrees on their own set of class rules at the start of the school year
- At the start of each school year all the pupils of a particular class will have ample opportunity to get acquainted with each other. The class teacher initiates and supervises social activities.
- Every teacher should use some time during his/her lessons to improve the class atmosphere; (s)he should propose activities that link his/ her subject matter with the passing on of values such as tolerance and respect.
- Values project Harmonic Tower, school trips, excursions, outings and other activities are organised to contribute to a positive social-emotional atmosphere.
- Ethics/religion lessons will be used to raise awareness of bullying and the procedures for dealing with it. Friends of victims will be encouraged to talk to teachers if victims feel that they are unable to do so.
- Using drama activities and role-play to help children be more assertive and teach them strategies to help them deal with bullying situations
- Organising regular anti-bullying training for all teachers, staff and parents. Each year at least one or two activities concerning the whole school or several classes are to be organised. This is aimed at strengthening the school cohesion among the different age groups and language sections.
- Undertaking regular questionnaires and surveys to monitor the extent of bullying in the school and the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
- Creation of working groups involving staff, pupils and parents in writing and reviewing the policy
- Prominently displaying anti-bullying posters produced by the children around the school
- Rearrangement of physical environment in order to reduce bullying incidences
- Using praise and rewards to reinforce good behaviour
- Continuous efforts of the school community to improve school climate (team building)
- Eligible students should have access to special education services, in order to intervene as mediators. They will be known throughout the school for their role as mediators
- Non-teaching staff will also be included in the meetings to raise awareness of bullying and the procedures for dealing with it.
- Classroom teachers should be able to consult school psychologists on general issues that involve the whole class or certain individuals. Parents will be informed immediately that their child is the subject of consultation

Anti-bullying rules

- We will treat others with respect and tolerance.
- We will try to help anyone who is being bullied.
- We will try to include anyone who is being left out.
- If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school or at home.

Recognition of risk factors

Teachers and parents may notice signs or changes in behaviour in a pupil that may indicate that he/she is being bullied. Parents should talk to their children about the school day in a casual way. They should show a genuine interest in getting to know how things are going and to give appropriate advice about respecting others and being friendly and tolerant. Explain to them that violence is never the way to solve problems and that adults are always ready to help. If you notice any of these signs, your child could be a victim of bullying: The following early warning signs are equally significant and they are not presented in order of seriousness. The early warning signs include:

- the child shows low school interest
- the child begins to do badly in school work
- the child is unwilling to go to school
- the child becomes withdrawn
- the child wants to be left alone
- the child expresses excessive feelings of isolation and being alone
- the child is suffering from insomnia and nightmares.
- the child is suffering from unexplained stomach-aches, headaches and panic attacks
- the child expresses excessive feelings of rejection
- the child expresses feelings of being picked on and persecuted
- the child has clothes or books regularly missing, torn or destroyed
- the child becomes disruptive or aggressive
- the child becomes sad, sullen, angry or scared after receiving a phone call or e-mail.
- the child starts stealing money
- the child is frightened or is reluctant to say what is wrong
- the child begins to express violence in writings and drawings
- the child attempts to run away or begins to self harm (in extreme cases attempts suicide)

If you are suspicious that your child could be a victim of bullying or bullying somebody, please, contact the school immediately. Preventing and tackling bullying when it occurs concerns us all. Contact person: Primary school Deputy Director, Secondary school: Deputy Director

Procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents

All staff will respond calmly and equally to all allegations and incidents of bullying at ESK. They will be taken seriously by all staff and dealt with impartially and promptly. All those involved will have the opportunity to be heard. Staff will protect and support all children involved whilst allegations and incidents are investigated and resolved. The following step-by-step procedure will be used for reporting and responding to bullying allegations or incidents:

1. Report immediately all bullying allegations and incidents to the nearest member of teaching staff if appropriate, the educational advisors, school management and parents.
2. Staff will make sure the victim(s) feels (feel) safe.
3. Appropriate advice will be given to help the victim(s).
4. Staff will listen and speak to all pupils involved about the incident separately and will record the details of the incident.
5. The problem will be identified and possible solutions will be suggested.
6. Staff will attempt to adopt a problem solving approach which will help pupils understand the consequences of their behaviour.
7. Appropriate action will be taken quickly to end the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying.
8. Appropriate measures will be taken to show and to reinforce to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable.
9. The bully (bullies) may be asked to sincerely apologise. Support will be given to help the bully (bullies) understand and change his/her/their behaviour. If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.

10. In serious cases the bullying incident will be referred immediately to the Deputy Directors, who together with the class teachers / educational advisors will interview the pupils (both victim(s) and bully(ies)) involved. Parents may be involved. The incidents will be recorded in detail and will be kept in the personal file of the pupil. Anonymous details of the incident will be entered in an appropriate data-base.
11. In serious cases the parents will be contacted and invited to come into school for a meeting to discuss the problem. If necessary and appropriate, Social Services and / or police will be consulted. Appropriate professional help and counselling may be requested with parental agreement.
12. If the bullying persists, disciplinary measures within the frame of the disciplinary council of the school will be taken.
13. After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
14. Bullying incidents will be discussed regularly at staff meetings.

The Role of School Staff

The class teacher:

- Create an environment to allow pupils to discuss bullying.
- Be vigilant and sensitive to potential bullying in the class
- Take responsibility for bullying issues and manage solutions
- Report bullying to the deputy Director and track resolution
- Liaise with parents, as necessary

The subject teacher:

- Be vigilant and sensitive to potential bullying in the school.
- Report bullying to class teacher and/or relevant deputy director.

“LS/SEN teacher/coordinator:

- As per subject teacher (above)
- Be available and supportive of confidential discussions with pupils with the permission of the parents if necessary.

The supervisory teacher and all other staff:

- As per subject teacher (above)

The educational advisor

- Speaks to the pupils involved
- Liaise with parents, as necessary
- Reports bullying to the direction
- Reports bullying incidences to all class teachers and tracks resolution
- Organises meetings between parties involved

Psychologist:

- To be consulted by head-teacher, as required.
- To be available and supportive of confidential discussions with pupils.
- Will be answerable to parents/guardians, upholding the normal doctor/patient confidentiality rules

Management:

- Has overall responsibility for the bullying policy and its implementation
- Contacts local authorities if necessary
- Run a monthly review of bullying incidents.
- Ensures solutions are in place in appropriate timescales.
- Manages the overall cooperation with all parents involved
- Ensures that all appropriate information is clearly and quickly communicated to all parties
- Ensures that detailed reports are kept.
- Involves external resources, as needed (eg police, social services etc.)

Parents:

- To work together with teachers and management to ensure full integration of their child into the school community. This includes partaking in school trips and all class activities.
- To bring to the school notice any concerns that may have as early as possible, so the suspected bullying incidences can be investigated and dealt before they escalate
- To cooperate with the school as much as possible to ensure a quick resolution and positive outcome for the benefit of the victim(s) and the bully(ies)
- To understand and respect the need for confidentiality when necessary in the best interest of all persons involved

Monitoring and evaluation of the policy

To ensure this policy is effective, it will be regularly monitored and evaluated (reviewed) at the beginning of each school year. Questionnaires completed by the whole school Community, together with surveys, working groups, children's and parents and guardians' comments posted in the 'Wibble*' box (under construction in www.eskar.org) and bullying data-base will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the policy. Following the annual review any amendments will be made to the policy and proposed to the educational council for approval. The revised policy will be distributed to all parents and uploaded to the school website.

For out of school activities – MOMI, transport, school trips, after-school activities the same rules apply. Student –supervisors in buses and trams should undergo training in anti-bullying strategies at the beginning of the school year. Bus supervision will record any incident related to bullying, which is then to be reported to the person responsible for transport and the deputy-directors. Disciplinary measures will be applied according to the frequency and severe ness of the incidence.