International School Rheintal

Anti-Bullying Policy

January 2025

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ISR Guiding Statements

International School Rheintal Vision

ISR is the school of choice in the Alpen Rheintal region providing a high quality international education in English for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12, inspiring international-mindedness, academic and personal excellence and responsible engagement.

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International School Rheintal Mission

ISR is a supportive, challenging and student-centered environment. We encourage each student to reach their potential whilst promoting international-mindedness, empathy and life-long learning. Through teamwork and individual endeavours, members of the school community should:

- Respect and take responsibility for themselves, others and the environment
- Appreciate and respect diversity
- Think critically
- Reflect thoughtfully
- Communicate effectively
- Celebrate success

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ISR Anti-Bullying Policy Statement

International School Rheintal is committed to providing a supportive, caring and safe environment in which all individuals can thrive without the fear of intimidation. As a school we take bullying and its impact seriously. Bullying of any form is not tolerated on school grounds, during school sponsored events or online activities. To raise awareness this topic is discussed in the PSHE lessons (Physical, Social, Health and Economic Education) and ISR participates in international campaigns against bullying behaviour.

Staff, children and parents or carers will be made aware of the school's position on bullying. Bullying behaviour is unacceptable in any form. The school has high expectations of outstanding behaviour as outlined in the

Code of Conduct Policy (2024).pdf and we consistently challenge any behaviour that falls below this. Anyone who has knowledge of a bullying occurrence is expected to tell a member of staff. Any child who is a victim of bullying will be supported in a sympathetic manner. If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be addressed immediately by the member of staff informed, and then discussed with the Head of School and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). A clear account of the incident will be recorded in the DSL log and in Managebac. All staff will be informed so that close monitoring of the victim and bully can begin. Parents of both parties will be informed.

Definition of Bullying

We recognise that many children and young people will experience conflict in their relationships with other children and young people and as a school we are committed to developing empathy and the skills to manage relationships in a peaceful way that does not harm others.

In the International School Rheintal, our definition of bullying is:

"The repetitive, intentional, hurting of one person or group by another person or group where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online."

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

There is considerable evidence to show that bullying has both short term and longer term impact on pupils. Bullying impacts on pupils' wellbeing, can impact on attendance and become a significant barrier to learning. Bullying is associated with lower levels of school engagement and achievement both in primary and senior schools and can lead to mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression. Bullying is unacceptable. ISR will respond promptly and effectively to reported incidents of bullying.

Here at ISR:

- Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.
- Everybody has the right to feel happy and safe.
- No-one deserves to be a target of bullying.
- Students who bully need to learn different ways of behaving.

Types of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying can take many forms:

- **Emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening behaviour
- **Verbal** - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, use of derogatory language
- **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence

- **Extortion** - demanding money/goods with threats
- **Racist** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic or biphobic** - bullying because of sexuality or perceived sexuality
- **Transphobic** – because of gender identity or perceived gender identity
- **Online/ Cyberbullying** - the use of information and communications technology, particularly mobile phones, email, social media websites, text messages, cameras and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. Cyberbullying can take place outside of the normal school day and be directed towards the victim while he or she is at home. Silent phone calls or abusive texts or emails can be just as distressing as being bullied face to face. Cyber bullying can have a profound effect on a child as the technology allows information (or misinformation) to be distributed widely, instantly and directly to the child's home or mobile device. The victim can feel that there is nowhere available for him to escape from the bullying. ISR will take action against any student responsible for using electronic devices to bully another student even if the bullying is taking place outside of the grounds of the school.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- does not want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stuttering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work

- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what is wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when an online message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Preventing Bullying

We foster a clear understanding that bullying, in any form, is unacceptable. We believe that preventing bullying is the responsibility of our whole school community and when there are incidents of bullying we will work together to deal with the situation and to learn from what has happened. Here at ISR we do this by:

- Involving the school community in developing our policy.
- Referencing to the ISR Code of Conduct when talking to the students about behaviour expectations.
- Using assemblies, homeroom and PSHE lessons to ensure that pupils understand the ISR Code of Conduct and differences between relational conflict and bullying. ISR participates in the annual Anti-Bullying Week campaign.
- Creating a safe and happy environment, with consequent positive relationships that have an impact on learning and achievement.
- Secure the safety of the target of bullying.
- Take actions to stop the bullying from happening again.
- Whole school learning - reflection on what we have learnt.

- Think about any safeguarding concern and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Provide assurances to the child that concerns have been listened to and action will be taken.
- Consider who else is involved and what roles they have taken.
- Send a clear message that the bullying must stop. Work with both parties to find solutions.
- Identify the most effective way of preventing recurrence and any consequences.
- Reflect and learn from bullying episodes –consider what needs to happen next to prevent future bullying e.g. PSHE, training etc.
- Raising awareness of online bullying through regular online safety lessons. ● Adopting a social model approach to bullying which means that the strategies should be person-centred. It is emphasised that diversity is valued and everyone is included in our school.
- Focussed work with individuals and groups of pupils who require support, understanding and development of social skills.
- Ensuring staff on duty during break times have skills in supporting students in resolving conflicts.
- Offering training to all school staff around bullying, including specific guidance on those groups who are most likely to be bullied.

Reporting Procedures

1. The message that bullying should be reported must be strongly communicated to students, and the wider community. Students can report to their trusted adult at home and in school. Any member of staff should record any form of unkind behaviours that students demonstrate in Managebac. This will be helpful in tracking repeated hurtful behaviour towards another student.

2. If a student is involved in demonstrating hurtful, unkind behaviour towards another student repeatedly (at least three of the steps in the consequence section of the Code of Conduct procedure have been followed), this should be reported without delay using the “Safeguarding My School", the online Safeguarding reporting platform of ISR. The Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy

will be informed immediately. The Safeguarding Lead will use the ISR ChildProtection Policy (2024).pdf in dealing with the bullying incident.

3. During the initial report, while any child who is prepared to report bullying must be offered support and protection, staff must under no circumstances promise confidentiality – any action taken will necessarily involve others.

4. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be investigated jointly by the DSL, Head of School or homeroom teacher/s.

5. Children are taught that it is important to talk to a trusted adult if bullying is taking place outside of school.

6. Parents are also encouraged to report concerns and bullying to named individuals. This is normally to the homeroom teachers. The Complaints Policy also outlines the process in more detail for complaints and concerns.

7. When pupils report their concerns our staff are trained to LISTEN and to BELIEVE. We involve students as far as possible in finding solutions.

Responding to Bullying

We monitor and review all bullying incidents to determine any patterns or trends that may require further action. On a regular basis we give students the opportunity to feedback on how safe and happy they feel at school. We do this through questionnaires and PSHE lessons. All staff are required to report to the DSL using the “Safeguard My School” reporting platform when dealing with incidents of bullying. This should be submitted as soon as possible; ideally the same day as reported. ISR has a guidance counselor who can provide emotional support to both parties in school when needed. There are situations where the students involved will be referred to external agencies for counselling or behaviour support.

When all resources are exhausted to find solutions, and the bullying behaviour continues to be a threat to the safety and well-being of other students, the dismissal of the student with ongoing bullying behaviour will be a possibility to ensure the safety of the wider community. Assistance will be given to the student and their family to find support and placement outside the ISR community.

Procedures for Parents

- If a parent has any concerns about their child they should speak to the homeroom teacher immediately.
- If a parent thinks bullying is the issue, the matter will be referred to the DSL and Head of School.
- The Head of School is always informed of any bullying concerns at ISR and monitors the situation carefully.
- If a parent feels unable to talk to the homeroom teacher, they can make an appointment to speak directly with the Head of School.
- The school will work with both the child and the parents to ensure that any bullying is stopped and that support is given where needed.
- Parents should not confront the bully or their parents. This can complicate the situation and distress the students.
- The school will deal directly with all students involved and their parents directly.
- Parents will be kept informed of any actions the school is taking. ● If parents feel that their concern has not been dealt with appropriately they should follow ISR's Complaints Policy and Procedure .
- All members of the school community, including students, staff, parents and governors, are expected to treat everyone with dignity and respect at all times. This includes both face-to-face contact and online.

Linked ISR Policies

All ISR policies can be viewed on its website: https://www.isr.ch/our-school/our-policies.
The following policies are particularly pertinent in supporting this Anti-Bullying Policy:

- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Educational Trips Policy
- ICT Policy Parents and Students
- Inclusion Policy
- Learning and Teaching Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy