**British International School
of Timisoara**

We Provide the Foundation on Which Our Children Can Flourish

School Policies

Anti-Bullying Policy

Approved by:	Head of School	Date: April 2019
Last reviewed by:	School Leadership Team	Date: May 2024
Next reviewed by:	School Leadership Team	Date: May 2025

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We expect staff, parents, volunteers, visitors and the students to share this commitment.*

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General

British International School of Timisoara is a coeducational private international school offering a British-style education and accepting children aged between 4 and 18.

British International School of Timisoara offers its students a truly international experience through a British-style curriculum and adheres to the guidelines of the Council of British International Schools, Cambridge Assessment International Education and the International Baccalaureate Organisation. Our qualified, internationally-experienced and dynamic educators teach all subjects in English, with the exception of the lessons of Romanian, which are being taught by qualified and engaging local teachers.

Our Vision

We provide the Foundation on which our Children can Flourish
Inspiring our students to Learn and Live with Purpose

Our Mission

Building a community of learners where students are given meaningful opportunities to learn, experience, grow, succeed and excel in all areas of their academic and personal development

Our Core Values

We Think, We Explore and We Learn
We Listen, We Respect and We Care
We Speak Up, We Participate and We Strive

At BIST we want to ensure that all members of our community understand and adhere to our school ethos and values. Rules and regulations will be in place to protect all members of the community and to give everyone equal opportunities for development and progress.

Introduction

At BIST we are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

We respect difference and welcome diversity in our children, young people and in society in general, and believe our school should be inclusive. We believe that students have the right to feel safe, secure, and valued and that creating a safe environment and dealing with bullying is everyone's responsibility.

We will discuss bullying within the School's PSHEE programme, actively support a range of positive strategies to deal with bullying, and actively challenge the use of humiliation, fear, ridicule and other similar approaches to reduce bullying.

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to understand that bullying is wrong and unacceptable in any form and need to learn different ways of behaving. BIST has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

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Aims

BIST aims to establish a positive school culture in which all members of the community feel safe and confident, and treat each other with respect and courtesy, particularly regarding individual differences. To this end, the school treats bullying in all its forms very seriously and has a policy and systems in place to ensure that all students are aware that bullying is unacceptable, understand the consequences of bullying are actively dissuaded from bullying. The high priority given to anti-bullying ensures that students and staff are alert to the signs of bullying and will proactively intervene whenever there is any indication that an instance of bullying may be taking place.

We aim to:
- enable students to understand clearly what constitutes bullying and to understand that bullying, whatever its form, will not be tolerated by the school community;
- enable parents to feel confident that bullying incidents will be firmly dealt with by the school;
- create a safe environment and promote a care and non-aggressive ethos in the school;
- raise staff awareness of the presence of different types of bullying, and an awareness of groups of students who are bullied disproportionately;
- establish guidelines for action where bullying is evident;
- develop a range of effective strategies for pupils to learn about moral and social issues;
- ensure students can explain how we expect them to behave.

Overview

This policy should be read and understood in the context of our Good Behaviour Policy, our Equal Opportunities Policy, and our approach to PSHEE and SMSC.

This policy has been developed in concordance with the DfE documents on Anti-Bullying: *"Preventing and tackling bullying"* and *"Supporting children and young people who are bullied"*.

The Independent School Standards Regulations provide that the proprietor of an independent school is required to ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented.

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a Child Safeguarding concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to the Head of School and Designated Safeguarding Lead. The support of external services may be accessed to tackle any underlying issues which have contributed to a child engaging in bullying. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, school may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassment or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence. If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should inform the Head of School who could seek assistance from the police.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally, which can cause psychological damage. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs/learning disability, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities.

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It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways. It may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), and derive from an intellectual imbalance, having access to the support of a group or the capacity to isolate others socially. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Bullying is use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:
- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (eg hiding books, threatening gestures);
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- Non-verbal communication – unkind looks and expressions, hand gestures;
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
- Homophobic – because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality;
- Verbal name-calling – sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing;
- Cyber – all areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, ie camera and video facilities;
- Prejudice – based bullying related to special educational need, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, social deprivation, gender reassignment or disability.

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:
- is frightened of walking to or from school;
- doesn't 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 stammering;
- 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 schoolwork;
- 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;

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- is bullying other children or siblings;
- stops eating;
- is frightened to say what's wrong;
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above;
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone;
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received;

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

BIST Procedures

Training for staff is an important aspect of our work to prevent and tackle bullying, including the different types of bullying. At BIST, staff receive relevant training and understand the importance of this policy.

We all understand that bullying can occur in any school and that we have a responsibility to be vigilant for incidents especially at times and in places where it is more likely to occur. We ensure that the physical layout of our buildings and our safety mechanisms such as CCTV all help to discourage and reduce the risk of bullying.

We aim to ensure staff feel confident to consistently tackle all forms of bullying and that students are empowered to say "NO" to bullying.

If a member of staff suspects that bullying is taking place, or a disclosure is made to them about an incident of bullying, they should always consult a senior member of staff. Under the guidance of a senior staff member, an age appropriate investigation should take place. Separate meetings, at which all conversations should be recorded in writing, should be arranged with those involved to establish their version of events and assure them that the situation will be dealt with sensitively, but firmly, and fully. Parents of both parties are always kept fully informed about how the bullying is being dealt with.

Bullying behaviour will normally be addressed through the provision of counselling for all parties involved. A proven allegation of serious bullying is likely result in suspension or exclusion with the possible involvement of the police authorities. Following the incident, a senior staff member oversees the monitoring of the situation, liaising directly with the relevant advisor/class teacher to check that further bullying is not occurring.

Parents are asked to keep the school and staff informed of any concerns and encourage their child to report any incidents immediately to an appropriate staff member. The Head of School will ensure that the incident and any action taken are formally recorded in the behaviour/incident log.

The immediate priority is to stop the bullying so instances will be dealt with without delay. BIST takes the standpoint that most pupils involved in bullying do not intend to inflict significant harm. As a first recourse those who bully will be counselled by pastoral staff: an appeal will be made to 'better nature' and a commitment to correct the behaviour will be elicited. The bully should apologise to the victim.

In serious or persistent cases of bullying parents should be informed and may be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem, and if necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted. All attempts will be made to help the bully or bullies change their behaviour.

Incidents of bullying will be recorded by relevant pastoral staff in the incident book. This will enable patterns to be identified, and keeping records of bullying incidents will also enable the school to:
- manage individual cases effectively;
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies;

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- identify possible areas in the school where bullying is more likely to take place and improve monitoring as required;
- celebrate the anti-bullying work of the school;
- respond effectively and swiftly to concerns from parents.

Sanctions for bullying are intended to hold pupils who bully to account for their behaviour and to ensure that they face up to the harm that they have caused and learn from it. They also provide an opportunity for the pupil to put right the harm they have caused. Sanctions available are detailed in the school's Rewards ad Sanctions policy.

Good Behaviour Policy

Ultimately, bullies will not be tolerated at this school and permanent exclusion will be used if, at the Head of School's discretion in consultation with the School Board, it is considered appropriate and that the relevant procedures have been followed accordingly. The Head of School must discuss serious cases that lead to suspension and exclusion with the SLT and the School Board.

Preventative Strategies

We aim to create an environment that prevents bullying from being a serious problem in the first place.

We talk with pupils through the curriculum about issues of difference and use dedicated project time and events such as special assemblies. We cover the issue of bullying within the school PSHEE programme, ensuring that students understand what types of behaviour can be defined and identified as bullying and why bullying is unacceptable. We ensure that students understand that BIST has a "No Tolerance Approach' to bullying, and what the consequences of bullying are at BIST for the student/s involved in bullying.

We will establish a mentoring system in which the older students, work to provide a safe inclusive learning culture for our younger children. We proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This is done through the staff and student mentoring system, through staff reporting signs of potential bullying observed in class or on duty, and through regular termly questionnaires given to students, which include a section on bullying.

We will also set up an anti-bullying boxes in the school, where students can leave a message to say that they are being bullied or that they know someone who is being bullied.

We are aware that schools which excel at tackling bullying have created an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know this is the right way to behave. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment. We reinforce these messages by the behaviour and attitudes of our staff who set a good example.

Successful Intervention Strategies

We apply disciplinary measures to pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. In accordance with our behaviour policy, we apply sanctions fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils.

We also consider carefully the motivating factors which may have affected the bullying behaviour and whether it indicates any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case, the child engaging in the bullying behaviour may need support themselves.

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We involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and that they are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. At BIST, we make sure that our parents feel confident that we will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way which protects the child.

We involve pupils so they understand our approach towards bullying and so they are clear in the part they have to play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

We regularly evaluate our approach and ensure that our policy and practice is up to date.

We make sure that the consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.

We teach children that using any prejudice-based language is unacceptable.

We work with the wider community such as the police and children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed.

We make it easy for pupils to report bullying either directly to a staff member, to a senior student mentor, or through the student drop boxes positioned inside school, so that they feel assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted upon.

Monitoring & Evaluation

We regularly report to our School Leadership Team on the views of our pupils, and in particular, the incidences of bullying in school including which types are prevalent so that we can continuously improve our practices.

Flow chart for reporting bullying

Pupil/staff member
⬇
Class teacher, class tutor
⬇
Senior Leadership
⬇
Head of School
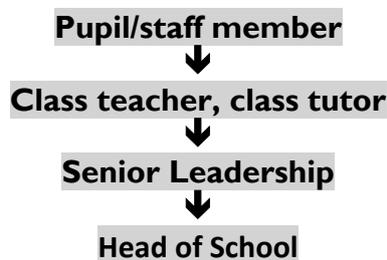
Related policies

- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Good Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- First Aid and Medical Policy
- PSHEE Policy

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Background information

BESAG, V **Bullies and victims in schools** Open University Press, 1989.
A thorough account of the problem of bullying, summarising research into the subject and describing practical strategies for schools

BBC EDUCATION **Bullying: A Survival Guide** P.O. Box 7, London W12 8UD.
A booklet dealing with all aspects of bullying

DOUGLAS N, WARWICK I, KEMPS S, WHITTY G. **playing it safe: Responses of Secondary school teachers to lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils, bullying, HIV and AIDS, and Section 28** London: Health and Education Research Unit, Institute of Education, November 1997.

ELLIOTT, M. (editor) **Bullying: a practical guide for coping in schools.** Harlow: Longman, second edition 1997

KELLY, E & COHN, T **Racism in schools - new research evidence** Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books, 1988

McLEOD, M & MORRIS, S **Why Me? Children talking to Childline about bullying** Childline, Royal Mail Building, Studd Street, London N1 0QW, 1996

OLWEUS, D. **bullying at school: What we know and what we can do.** Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.

RIGBY, K. **Bullying in schools and what to do about it** London: Jessica Kingsley, 1997.A clear single-authored overview of the topic.

ROSS, D M. **Childhood bullying and teasing: What school personnel, other professionals, and parents can do.** Alexandria, VA: American Counselling Association, 1998.

Useful Websites and documents

- Education and Inspection Act 2006 Section 89 The Equality Act 2010
- Anti-bullying Alliance (ABA)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017)
- Cyberbullying: Advice for head teachers and school staff (2014)
- The statutory guidance set out in KCSIE (September 2024).

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