



BELVEDERE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

CYBERBULLYING POLICY

2024-2025

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Hili, Al Ain, United Arab Emirates

www.belvedereinternationalschool.com



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Introduction

Belvedere International School (BIS) recognises that technology plays an important and positive role in everyone's lives, both educationally and socially. It is committed to helping all members of the school community to understand both the benefits and the risks, and to equip children with the knowledge and skills to be able to use technology safely and responsibly.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- We safeguard the pupils in the real and virtual world
- Pupils, staff and parents are educated to understand what cyberbullying is and what its consequences can be.
- Knowledge, policies and procedures are in place to prevent incidents of cyberbullying in school or within the school community.
- We have effective measures to deal effectively with cases of cyberbullying. · We monitor the effectiveness of prevention measures.

Cyberbullying – Definition

Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.

Cyberbullying can involve social networking sites, emails and mobile phones used for SMS messages and as cameras. In addition;

- It can be used to carry out all the different types of bullying; an extension of face-to-face bullying
- It can also go further in that it can invade home/personal space and can involve a greater number of people
- It can take place across all age groups and school staff and other adults can be targeted
- It can draw bystanders into being accessories
- It includes: threats and intimidation; harassment or 'cyberstalking'; vilification; exclusion or peer rejection; Impersonation; and manipulation
- It includes cyber stalking, e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts, defamation

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- It includes the circulation of private information or images
- It can be an illegal act as in the UAE it is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites

Preventing Bullying

BIS educates students both in the proper use of technology and about the serious consequences of cyber-bullying and will, through curriculum links, computing lessons and assemblies, continue to inform and educate its students in these fast-changing areas.

BIS trains its staff to respond effectively to the reports of cyber-bullying or harassment and has systems in place to respond to it. It blocks access to inappropriate web sites by using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems. No pupil is allowed to work on the internet in the Computer Room, or any other location within the school which may from time to time be used for such work, without a member of staff present.

All members of the School community are aware they have a duty to bring to the attention of the concerned Leaders any example of cyber-bullying or harassment or misuse of technology that they know about or suspect. Leaders know to respond effectively to reports of cyber-bullying or harassment and as a school there are systems in place to respond to it.

Students are only permitted to use devices connected to the internet with permission from a teacher. Whilst education and guidance remain at the heart of what we do, BIS will take action against those who take part in cyber-bullying in line with the guidelines in the Anti-Bullying policy. In addition, BIS will confiscate devices where necessary to prevent students from misusing equipment.

If an incident takes place in the evening or at the weekend, BIS reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school. BIS will keep good records of all cyberbullying incidents. Students are encouraged to report any suspicions of cyberbullying and have access to the School Social Worker. Support is offered to victims of cyberbullying including emotional support and reassurance. Sanctions are issued in line with our Anti-Bullying policy.

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Roles and Responsibilities

Guidance for Staff

- All staff have a responsibility to prevent misuse of equipment and cyberbullying. Staff may ask to look at content on a student's personal device, but it is good practice to do so with 2 adults present. Mobile Phones
- Ask the student to show you the mobile phone
- Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message or image, to include the date, time and names
- Make a transcript of a spoken message, again record date, times and names
- Tell the student to save the message/image
- Inform a member of the Senior Leadership team and pass them the information that you have
- Computers/Laptops/iPad
- Ask the students to get up on-screen the material in question
- Ask the students to save the material
- If possible, print off the offending material straight away
- If possible and with the student's agreement, a screen capture image may be able to be sent to the staff's school email account
- Inform a member of the Senior Leadership team and pass them the information that you have
- Normal anti-bullying procedures to interview students and to take statements will then be followed particularly if a child protection issue is presented

Guidance for Students

- Should follow the school's code of conduct/behaviour policy, when writing online. It is acceptable to disagree with someone else's opinions, however, do it in a respectful way. What is inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online
- Must speak to an adult as soon as possible if they believe someone is a victim on cyberbullying
- Should not answer abusive messages but save them and report them
- Should not delete anything until it has been shown to parents or a member of staff at BIS (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyberbullying)

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- Should not give out personal IT details
- Should never reply to abusive e-mails or messages in chat rooms or other social media
- Should never reply to someone you do not know

Guidance for Parents

- It is vital that parents and the school work together to ensure that all students are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyberbullying
- Parents can help by making sure their child understands the school's policy and, above all, how seriously BIS takes incidents of cyberbullying
- Parents should also explain to their children legal issues relating to cyberbullying
- If parents believe their child is the victim of cyberbullying, they should save the offending material (if need be by saving an offensive text on their or their child's mobile phone) and make sure they have all relevant information before deleting anything
- Parents should contact the school as soon as possible. A meeting can then be arranged with a member of the Middle Leadership Team or Senior Leadership Team.

Investigation Procedures

If a cyberbullying incident is seen or reported by a student to any teacher or class teacher, immediate action must be taken and children involved must be counseled. As soon as the school receives a report that a child has been cyberbullied, the Principal/Vice Principal/Head of Section/Head of Years/ and School Social Worker is informed.

- A committee is constituted comprising of the Principal / Vice Principal / Head of Section / and the School Social Worker
- An investigation is immediately held to trace the sequence of events
- Facts from Parents/Class Teachers/Head of Year/ Head of Section & the person who reports the matter, are noted
- The victim is kept calm and assured of all help and support
- The alleged pupil(s) is questioned in the office of the Social Worker
- A letter is written to the parents of the alleged pupil(s), requesting them to meet with the committee
- The pupil and the parents are spoken to
- The pupil is counselled/reprimanded

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- Depending on the severity of the situation the alleged pupil(s) could be suspended from school
- All copies of correspondence are placed in the files of both the victim and the bully

If the conduct causes or threatens to cause a substantial disruption at school or interferes with the rights of students to be secure, school administration may impose consequences.

The Administration may also report the Cyberbullying or Harassment to the police

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