



St. Mary's Catholic High School, Dubai – Muhaisnah

SMM RESILIENCY AND BULLYING POLICY

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SMM Resiliency (anti-bullying) Policy

Rationale:

With the mission of SMM to provide **holistic**, quality, affordable, and **inclusive** education that develops innovative, globally aware and lifelong learners who are capable of **making good moral judgements**, guided by the values of **respect**, honesty, **compassion**, and excellence in a **multicultural** environment, there is, ZERO tolerance of bullying yet no denouncing of the bully. Mutual care is given to both the bully and the victim as guided by both values of compassion and respect, respectively.

Both the bully and the victim are cared for and are responded to accordingly by the Office of pastoral care and students support carefully because of the deep understanding of the vicious cycle of bullying that the perceived "bully" himself/herself may also have been victimised, and equally with the victim, will need the same care and compassion where his/her needs also has to be addressed. Coming from the philosophy that we are all wonderfully created in the image and likeness of our good creator, thus, making us innately good only sometimes beset with troubles causing us to make mistakes and untoward incidents against others. The policy of SMM on bullying will not discount the restorative action that may be bestowed to the perpetrators of the mistake, but through the concerted efforts of the Heads of Key Stages together with their teachers and the restorative discipline of the student support team through counselling, there will be a more positive and compassionate approach to correcting and restoring good behaviour in a child who needed support and care as well.

Student's resiliency and the non-corruption of the young mind about the value of respect is will be given more regard rather than just alleviating the possible difficult emotion and reactions of the victim about the untoward situation. Keeping in mind that most cases of bullying, if not all, are a product of a social stand-off in dominance behaviour among students, there is also a need to address the possibility of the "resulting victim" to be corrected and guided through empowerment and motivational counselling.

Objectives of the Policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All heads of key stages and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

What is bullying?

SMM as part of a community both upholding safety for the holistic development of its students and promoting a safe school environment will consider an act of bullying based on the simple definition:

Bullying is an intentionally hurtful behaviour that is repeated over time and has an imbalance of power.

Forms of bullying include:

1. Physical bullying- pushing, kicking, biting, hitting, punching or any use of violence or intentional act that may cause harm (laying obstacles or himself/herself causing someone to trip or fall).



2. Verbal bullying - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
3. Social/Emotional bullying - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures).
4. Cyber bullying – harming with the malicious use of internet and any other forms of social media or cyber interactive sites.
5. Sexual bullying - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
6. Racial bullying - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.

Role of Staff

Staff must remain vigilant about bullying behaviours and approach this in the same way as any other category of Child Abuse; that is, do not wait to be told before you raise concerns or deal directly with the matter. Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; because they may be too young or have a level of Special Educational Needs which means that they may be unable to realise what others may be doing to them.

Staff must also be aware of those children who may be vulnerable pupils; those coming from troubled families, or those responding to emotional problems or mental health issues which may bring about a tendency to be unkind to others, or may make them more likely to fall victim to the behaviour of others.

Responding to bullying with proactive measures for students, parents and school staff help improve the safe conditions of a school community and help builds a happy and respectful learning environment. It also gives room for immediate addressing of both the concerned parties needs thereby forming both in positive and guided holistic development.

Signs and Symptoms

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 or refer if a child often:

- Has unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewellery
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating. Kids may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem
- Self-destructive behaviours such as running away from caring adults, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

Prevention Bullying

SMM involves the whole community and takes proactive measures to disallow bullying to happen by:

1. Assigning staff and prefects in respective places during arrival time and breaks(refer to Prefect duties and staff duties from the office of the pastoral care and student support)
2. Holding weeklong orientation and assemblies on bullying through concerted efforts



of Heads of Key stages and Form teachers.

3. Designing and implementing intervention programs suited year level with focus on the value of respect and resiliency.
4. Reinforcement and correction of behaviour through merit awards and warning slips(refer to behaviour policy).
5. Setting class rules and making of artistic expressions about bullying and stopping it.
6. Writing a personal pledge or promise against bullying.
7. Individual and pastoral counselling through restorative discipline.

3 Major Philosophical Strands on Restorative Discipline:

1. Constructivism - Holds that individuals gain meaning and motivation when they are given power to make their own decisions and to engage in the problem-solving process through collaboration.
2. Critical reflection - Describes a problem-solving process that honours multiple perspectives and emphasizes creative problem-solving along with an analysis of systems and situations.
3. Psycho-education approach - Values an understanding of the internal feelings, needs, and conflicts that motivate behaviour: the harm done by misbehaviour and the consequent need to put things as right as possible.

Key goals

- To encourage accountability and responsibility through personal reflection within a collaborative process
- Respond to the needs of the person harmed and the person who harmed
- Create caring climates to support healthy communities

How do we deal with bullying?

In an instance of a reported bullying case or there is alleged bullying, the immediate referral person in the school are the Heads of Key Stages who will be investigating the matter thoroughly and will be subjected to the behaviour policy. Levels of corrective action may vary according to the gravity of the situation with respect to the value of compassion for the perpetrator so as not to create a feeling of punishment but a sense of responsibility towards the action done. The proven victim, not only for alleviation of the gravity of emotion, but also due the possibility of misguided sense of revenge to the bully or to identify other ill symptoms that may take effect, will need to be referred to the counsellor or for proper psychological guidance and care.

Depending on the severity of the case, after the Heads of key stages have dealt with the administrative concern and responsibility of the perpetrator of the bullying, they may refer the student to the counsellor for further counselling process and guidance of where the unwanted behaviour may have started. Involvement of parents and carers may be done at this point for the possibility of total correction and inclusive counselling (including home environment) and replacement behaviours facilitation, or may proceed to individual counselling.