

ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

POLICY ON BULLYING

The Islamic Educational Centre will not tolerate bullying or any behaviour that is counter-productive to the ethos of the school, and is in conflict with the basic teachings of Islam. The school has determined that school should be a safe and protective setting where learners are encouraged to strive towards and meet their academic goals. As such, bullying interferes with both, a learner's ability to learn and a school's ability to teach because of its disruptive nature. Positive behaviour including respecting others, setting an example, and discouraging bullying, is expected of all staff, learners, and parents.

Schools play a critical role in the process of child and adolescent development by providing the components or strengths they need to be caring and productive citizens in adulthood. Educators play a large part in building resilience in their learners, and educators' efforts are important because they support the efforts of families and community members in this child-raising collaborative.

Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional, & cyber (which includes email, cell phone, Facebook, etc.). Any gesture that is expressed through written language, verbally, and/or physically, that degrades a person is considered bullying. This includes, but is not limited to a person's race, religion, colour, gender, sexual orientation, disability, national origin, or any other unique characteristic. This behaviour will be considered bullying whether it takes place on or off school property, at any school function, or in a school vehicle.

DUTY OF THE SCHOOL

- Creation of a caring school environment – The school should be a warm, inviting, and accepting place. Parents and students alike should feel comfortable and welcome at school.
- Encouragement of parents to get involved – Invite every parent to volunteer or contribute a skill to the classroom.
- Assistance to families who have situations that create roadblocks, and brainstorm with them and with other educators about ways to overcome these.
- Creation of ways for learners to contribute to the school so that they feel that they are a resource.
- Provision of clear boundaries and safety – Teachers need to be clear about their classroom rules and then enforce them.
- Three basic rules should guide all classrooms: respect for self, respect for others, and respect for property; all positive behaviour falls under these guidelines and creates a respectful and safe environment.
- Encouragement of school engagement – provide an array of extra-curricular and after school activities in order to promote bonding of learners at school through relationships, interests, extra mural activities and time;
- Promotion of a positive values system - children are not born with positive values, but every interaction that they have is a potential opportunity to help them learn;
- Involve the Representative Council of Learners to assist in the monitoring of bullying;

Bullying is a complex problem, but there are good tools and resources that can help parents, educators, and caring adults identify bullying behaviour. There are four, specific characteristics that can qualify a situation as bullying? The behaviour has to be intentional, be repetitive, be hurtful, and involve an imbalance of power.

- Intentional—Children can hurt other children by accident. Bullying, however, is always intentional and meant to cause some sort of harm, whether it is physical or verbal. This behaviour may persist even after the victim has asked the bully to stop.

- Repetitive—in most cases, bullying happens repeatedly. Bullies often target children who they know will not do anything about the behaviour, so they can continue bullying as long as they like.
- Hurtful—Bullying is a negative behaviour that may include physical or verbal harm. The types of hurtful behaviour that qualify as bullying are varied, but they all cause harm of some sort to the victim.
- Imbalance of power—if two children hold an equal amount of power, one cannot bully the other. This imbalance of power can come from different sources, including age, size, strength, and social status.
- Any learner who chooses to participate in bullying will face swift and severe consequences. However, each case will be examined on an individual and could vary, based on several factors including age, nature of the problem etc, to prevent it from happening again, and to protect the victim from further harm.

DEALING WITH A BULLY

What is expected of a learner?

- Verbal/Emotional Bullying – There are three steps that any learner who is being verbally bullied should do. These are in the following order:
- STOP – Take a deep breath. Look the bully directly in the eye.
- TALK – Say the bullies name.....followed by “I am not a.....(insert whatever name they called you). Do this loudly where everyone in the room will hear you.
- WALK – Turn around and walk away from the situation and find the closest adult to report the incident too.
- Physical Bullying – If you feel like you are about to be physically bullied by another student, immediately report it to an adult. Walk away from the situation as quickly as possible. Avoid being confrontational. If possible, find a friend nearby because bullies often will not take on more than one student at a time.
- Cyber Bullying – Keep a copy of any text, email, etc in which you feel like you are being bullied. Do not delete it. Show it to an adult as soon as possible.

OBSERVATION OF BULLYING

Any learner who observes another learner being bullied should immediately take action to stop that learner from being bullied. These actions may include:

1. Request the bully to stop;
2. Take the victim by the hand and lead him/her away;
3. Report it immediately to a prefect, teacher or member of Management.

Any learner who observes a bullying incident and fails to intervene in at least one of the three manners listed above will be subject to disciplinary action.

ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR

Teachers play a critical role in minimizing, and eventually eradicating bullying at school. The Islamic Educational Centre is no exception.

1. Talk to learners in the class about bullying, the dangers of bullying and intimidating/provoking others and the consequences of such action;
2. Be vigilant in the classroom and on the sport-fields and play-grounds – bullying can be subtle and innocuous.
3. Be alert to learner-gossip/learner grapevine that provides an early warning signal that someone is being bullied or constantly intimidated.
4. Intervene and speak to the bully and the victim to establish all the facts.
5. Document the interview and inform the Principal.

6. If the bullying escalates, set up a meeting with the parents of both learners to advise them of their rights, the Code of Conduct for Learners and the sanctions that are available.
7. If the bully fails to adhere to corrective behavioural change, inform the Principal for further referral to a School Psychologist or Social Worker.
8. All information regarding the bully and the tactics employed by him/her must be documented for future use.

ANTI-BULLYING AGREEMENT

We, the students of Islamic Educational Centre, agree to join together and stamp out bullying.

We believe that everybody should enjoy school equally by feeling safe, secure, and accepted, regardless of colour, race, gender, popularity, athletic ability, intelligence, and/or religious preference.

Bullying can be, but is not limited to: pushing, shoving, hitting, spitting, name calling, mocking/taunting, ridiculing, and/or excluding someone or several people. Bullying causes pain and stress to victims and is never justified or excusable as “kids being kids” “just teasing” or any other excuse. The victim is never responsible for being a target of bullying.

We, the students of Islamic Educational Centre agree to join together and stamp out bullying.

By this pledge, I/we agree to:

1. Value learner differences in and out of school.
2. Be aware of the school’s policies and support system with regard to bullying.
3. Acknowledge that whether I am being a bully or see someone being bullied, if I don’t report or stop the bullying, I am guilty of supporting bullying.
4. Be alert in places around the school where there is less adult supervision and bullying is more likely to occur.
5. Support learners who have been or are subject to bullying.
6. Work with other learners, teachers, and administrators to help the school deal with bullying effectively if it should occur.
7. Be a good role model by upholding my pledge in supporting zero tolerance towards bullying.

Learner’s Signature _____ Date _____

Parent’s Signature _____ Date _____

Teacher’s Signature _____ Date _____

Principal’s Signature _____ Date _____