



American International School
المدرسة الأمريكية الدولية

CYBER-BULLYING POLICY

2023-24

Principal: Dr. Layne B. Hunt

An outstanding school cultivating dynamic students who are culturally aware and collaborative within a multicultural society.
مدرسة متميزة بتنمية الطلاب الديناميين الذين لديهم وعي ثقافي و تعاوني داخل مجتمع متعدد الثقافات

CYBER BULLYING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

DEFINITION OF CYBER-BULLYING

Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself. By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

- Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones
- The use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation
- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites
- Using e-mail to message others
- Hijacking/cloning e-mail accounts
- Making threatening, abusive, and defamatory or humiliating remarks in chat rooms, to include Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, all social networking sites.

LEGAL ISSUES

Cyber-bullying is generally criminal in character. The law applies to cyberspace.

- It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

SCHOOL POLICY

American International School trains its staff to respond effectively to reports of cyber-bullying or harassment and has systems in place to respond to it. American International School endeavors to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems and no student 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. Where appropriate and responsible, American International School audits ICT communications and regularly reviews the security arrangements in place.

Whilst education and guidance remain at the heart of what we do, American International School reserves the right to take action against those who take part in cyber-bullying.

- All bullying is damaging but cyber-bullying and harassment can be always invasive of privacy. These acts may also be criminal acts.
- American International School supports victims and, when necessary, will work with the Police to detect those involved in criminal acts.
- American International School will use, as appropriate, the full range of sanctions to correct, punish or remove students who bully fellow students or harass staff in this way, both in and out of school.
- American International School will use its power of confiscation where necessary to prevent students from committing crimes or misusing equipment.
- All members of the School community are aware they have a duty to bring to the attention of the Head any example of cyber-bullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.

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GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

If you suspect or are told about a cyber-bullying incident, follow the protocol outlined below:

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
- Go with the student and see the Supervisor / Head of Section, or in their absence, a member of the Senior Leadership Team

Computers

- Ask the student to get up on-screen the material in question
- Ask the student to save the material
- Print off the offending material straight away
- Make sure you have got all pages in the right order and that there are no omissions
- Accompany the student, taking the offending material, to see the Supervisor.
- Normal procedures to interview students and to take statements will then be followed particularly if a child protection issue is presented.

GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS

If you believe you or someone else is the victim of cyber-bullying, you must speak to an adult as soon as possible. This person could be a parent/guardian, your tutor, your supervisor or the head of section.

- Do not answer abusive messages but log and report them
- Do not delete anything until it has been shown to your Form Teacher, your supervisor, parents/guardian or the head of section (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyber-bullying)
- Do not give out personal IT details
- Never reply to abusive e-mails
- Never reply to someone you do not know
- Stay in public areas in chat rooms

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 cyber-bullying. American International School informs parents of the cyber-bullying policy and the procedures in place to deal with cyber-bullying.

- Parents can help by making sure their child understands the school's policy and, above all, how seriously the School takes incidents of cyber-bullying
- Parents should also explain to their sons or daughters legal issues relating to cyberbullying
- If parents believe their child is the victim of cyber-bullying, 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 Head as soon as possible. A meeting can then be arranged with the Principal, which may involve other relevant members of staff
- If the incident falls in the holidays, the School reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school.