

AL SADIQ ISLAMIC ENGLISH SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY 2026–27

Policy Name	Anti-Bullying Policy
Stakeholders	All staff, students, parents, visitors and relevant members of the school community
Policy Lead	Vice Principal / Designated Safeguarding Lead
Status	Approved
Approved by	Principal / School Management
Effective From	Academic Year 2026–27
Monitoring Cycle	Ongoing monitoring; formal annual review
Next Review	August 2027 or earlier if required

1. Purpose

Al Sadiq Islamic English School (ASIES) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, inclusive and supportive environment in which every student is able to learn, participate and develop without fear of bullying. Bullying in any form is unacceptable. This policy establishes the school's approach to prevention, reporting, investigation, support, intervention, recording, monitoring and follow-up.

The policy aims not only to respond to incidents, but also to build a culture of kindness, empathy, respect, resilience, responsibility and inclusion in which students are confident to speak up and adults respond consistently.

The school implements this policy in accordance with UAE Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 (Wadeema's Law), UAE Federal Decree-Law No. 34 of 2021 (Combating Rumours and Cybercrimes), Executive Council Resolution No. (2) of 2017, and the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students and to all staff, parents, visitors and other adults whose actions or responsibilities affect students within the school community. Any allegation of bullying, harassment, or intimidating behaviour involving a member of staff towards a student is managed immediately under the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct, rather than peer-to-peer anti-bullying procedures. It applies to bullying or alleged bullying:

- on school premises;
- during lessons, break, lunch, arrival, dismissal and transitions;
- on school transport and during transport handover arrangements;
- during school trips, educational visits, competitions, extracurricular activities and school events;
- through digital platforms, social media, messaging, gaming or other technology where the behaviour affects a student or the school community;
- outside school where there is a clear connection to school relationships, student safety, wellbeing or learning.

3. Core Principles

- Every student has the right to feel safe, valued, respected and able to learn.
- Bullying is unacceptable and all reports will be taken seriously.
- Students will be listened to and will not be blamed for reporting a concern.
- Early intervention is essential to prevent escalation and repeated harm.
- Responses will be fair, proportionate, evidence-based and sensitive to safeguarding and inclusion needs.
- The school will support the student who has experienced bullying and address the behaviour and needs of the student displaying bullying behaviour.
- Retaliation against a student who reports bullying, participates in an investigation or supports another student is prohibited and will be treated seriously.
- Staff, students and parents share responsibility for creating and maintaining a respectful school culture.

4. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is harmful behaviour involving an imbalance of power, whether actual or perceived, that is intended or reasonably understood to cause harm, fear, humiliation, exclusion or distress and is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated. The imbalance of power may arise from physical strength, age, popularity, social influence, access to information or images, group size, position, language, ability or another factor.

Bullying can occur face-to-face or online and may be carried out by an individual or a group. Online content can be repeatedly viewed, shared or circulated even where the original act occurred only once.

5. What Bullying Is Not

Not every disagreement, friendship difficulty, isolated unkind comment or one-off conflict is bullying. Such behaviour may still breach school expectations and require intervention under the Behaviour for Learning Policy. Staff must consider the pattern, intent, impact, power imbalance and context before determining whether an incident meets the definition of bullying.

A single serious incident does not need to be labelled 'bullying' before the school acts. Violence, threats, discriminatory abuse, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, extortion, serious cyber abuse or any safeguarding concern must be addressed immediately under the appropriate safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

6. Forms of Bullying

- Physical bullying: hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, spitting, intimidating physical behaviour, taking or damaging belongings, or other deliberate physical harm.
- Verbal bullying: name-calling, insults, threats, mocking, humiliating comments, offensive jokes or repeated hurtful remarks.
- Social / relational bullying: deliberate exclusion, spreading rumours, manipulation of friendships, public humiliation, encouraging others to isolate a student or damaging social relationships.
- Cyberbullying: harassment, intimidation, threats, impersonation, exclusion, harmful posts, messages, images, videos, rumours or unauthorised sharing through social media, messaging, email, gaming or other digital platforms.
- Discriminatory bullying: bullying connected to disability/SOD, nationality, race, language, culture, religion, gender or another personal characteristic.
- Prejudicial or identity-based bullying: repeated harmful behaviour targeting a student's perceived identity, background, characteristics or difference.

- Sexualised bullying / harassment: sexual comments, rumours, gestures, unwanted sexualised attention, image-based abuse or other harmful sexual behaviour. Such concerns must also be considered under safeguarding procedures.
- Property / financial bullying: repeated taking, hiding, damaging or demanding money, food, belongings or other property.
- Coercive bullying: pressuring, threatening or manipulating a student to do something against their wishes, including participation in misconduct.

7. Signs That a Student May Be Experiencing Bullying

No single sign proves that bullying is occurring. Staff and parents should remain alert to changes or patterns such as:

- reluctance or refusal to attend school, particular lessons, transport, activities or locations;
- unexplained injuries or damaged/lost belongings;
- withdrawal, anxiety, tearfulness, irritability, aggression or sudden changes in behaviour;
- decline in attendance, punctuality, engagement, attainment or concentration;
- changes in friendship groups or repeated isolation;
- sleep difficulties, physical complaints or distress associated with school;
- fear or secrecy around phones, social media or online activity;
- frequent requests for money or unexplained loss of money/items;
- comments suggesting humiliation, hopelessness, fear or feeling unsafe.

Any concern about a student's immediate safety or wellbeing must be referred promptly through safeguarding procedures.

8. Prevention

ASIES uses a whole-school approach to prevent bullying rather than relying only on sanctions after incidents occur.

- Embedding kindness, empathy, respect, resilience and inclusion across school life.
- Explicitly teaching expectations for respectful behaviour and relationships.
- Age-appropriate PSHE/wellbeing lessons, assemblies, campaigns and awareness activities.
- Online safety and cyberbullying education through the curriculum and wider school programmes.
- Staff training to identify, prevent, record and respond to bullying.
- Visible and active staff supervision during break, lunch, arrival, dismissal and other higher-risk times.
- Student voice through Student Council, peer mentors, ambassadors, surveys and focus groups.
- Clear reporting routes that students understand and trust.
- Review of behaviour and pastoral data to identify patterns, locations, times, groups or students requiring intervention.
- Targeted support for vulnerable students and students whose communication needs may make reporting more difficult.
- Parent awareness and partnership in promoting respectful behaviour and safe online conduct.
- Training and deploying student-led Anti-Bullying and Cyber-Safety Ambassadors / Peer Mediators across all phases to foster peer support and promote safe school reporting.

9. Reporting Bullying

Students may report bullying whether they are experiencing it themselves, witnessing it or are concerned about another student.

- Students may speak to any trusted adult, including a teacher, supervisor, counsellor, Head of Section, DSL/DDSL or member of SLT.
- Parents may report concerns to the class/form teacher, Head of Section, DSL/DDSL or school leadership.
- Where the school provides an approved anonymous reporting route, students may use it; anonymous reports will be reviewed and acted upon as far as the available information allows.
- Staff who observe, receive or become aware of possible bullying must record and escalate the concern through the school's approved reporting process.
- A student should not be told to ignore bullying, resolve repeated intimidation alone or simply avoid the student displaying the behaviour.
- Urgent safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL/DDSL and must not wait for completion of routine forms.

10. Immediate Response

- Ensure the immediate safety of the student(s) involved.
- Listen calmly and take the concern seriously.
- Do not promise secrecy; explain that information will be shared only with those who need to help.
- Record the initial information accurately, including dates, locations, witnesses and relevant digital evidence where available.
- Notify the appropriate pastoral/section leader and the DSL/DDSL where safeguarding concerns are present.
- Consider whether separation, supervision, transport changes, seating changes or other temporary safety measures are required while the matter is reviewed.
- Preserve relevant evidence. Students and parents should not be asked to circulate harmful content further in order to prove a concern.

11. Investigation

Bullying concerns will be investigated promptly, fairly and as confidentially as possible. The purpose is to establish what occurred, assess risk, determine whether the behaviour meets the definition of bullying and identify the support and intervention required.

- Obtain separate accounts from relevant students and witnesses.
- Review available records, behavior logs, communication or digital evidence where appropriate and lawful.
- Review CCTV only through authorised school personnel where relevant.
- Consider previous incidents and whether a pattern exists.
- Consider power imbalance, repetition/potential repetition, intent, impact and context.
- Consider safeguarding, wellbeing, SEND/SOD, communication, EAL or other factors that may affect behavior, vulnerability or a student's ability to report.
- Avoid forced face-to-face confrontation between students during the investigation.
- Record findings, actions, parent communication and follow-up requirements.

The school will distinguish between a substantiated bullying concern, behavior that does not meet the bullying definition but still requires action, an inconclusive concern requiring monitoring, and an unfounded allegation.

An unsubstantiated report is not automatically treated as malicious; deliberate fabrication is addressed separately where supported by evidence.

12. Responding to a Substantiated Bullying Incident

The response will be proportionate to seriousness, frequency, impact, age, context and previous interventions.

- Immediate safety and protective measures for the student who experienced bullying.
- Appropriate consequences for the student displaying bullying behaviour in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.
- Restorative work where appropriate, safe, voluntary and likely to support recovery; restorative practice will not be used to pressure a student into reconciliation.
- Counselling, wellbeing or pastoral support where required.
- Behaviour targets, monitoring, mentoring or a behaviour contract where appropriate.
- Explicit re-teaching of respectful behaviour, empathy, digital citizenship and relationship skills.
- Parent meetings and documented agreed actions.
- Increased supervision or environmental changes where patterns are linked to particular locations or times.
- Safeguarding referral or external escalation where the nature or seriousness of the concern requires it.

13. Support for the Student Experiencing Bullying

- A named trusted adult/check-in arrangement where appropriate.
- Counselling or wellbeing support where needed.
- A safety plan for high-risk times, locations, transport or online concerns where appropriate.
- Reasonable adjustments to reduce immediate risk without unfairly restricting the targeted student's access to learning or activities.
- Regular follow-up to confirm that the bullying has stopped and that there has been no retaliation.
- Support to rebuild confidence, relationships, attendance and engagement where these have been affected.
- Clear communication with parents about actions that can appropriately be shared.

14. Support and Intervention for the Student Displaying Bullying Behaviour

Consequences are important, but the school will also seek to understand and change the behaviour. The student displaying bullying behaviour may require support to develop empathy, self-regulation, communication, conflict-resolution and relationship skills.

- clear explanation of the behaviour that must stop;
- appropriate consequence under the Behaviour for Learning Policy;
- reflection and restorative/reparation work where appropriate;
- counselling, mentoring or pastoral intervention;
- behaviour targets, monitoring card or contract;
- parent partnership;
- inclusion/SEND review where behaviour may be connected to additional need, without excusing harm;
- review of online access or school-device privileges where directly relevant and proportionate.

15. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying may occur at any time and can have a significant impact on school safety and wellbeing. The school may respond to online conduct outside school where it affects students, relationships, learning or safety within the school community. Serious cyber offences (including online extortion, defamation, non-consensual distribution of private images, or identity theft) violate UAE Federal Decree-Law No. 34 of 2021 and may be referred to the Dubai Police e-Crime platform and KHDA via the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- Students should save relevant evidence without forwarding or reposting harmful material.
- Staff must not ask students to download, copy or circulate illegal or highly sensitive content unnecessarily.
- Image-based abuse, sexual content, grooming, threats, extortion or serious online harassment must be referred immediately to the DSL/DDSL.
- The school may require removal of harmful content where this is within the student's/parent's control and may advise parents to use platform reporting mechanisms.
- School devices, networks and accounts are subject to the school's ICT/Acceptable Use and Online Safety procedures.

16. Discriminatory, Sexualised and Safeguarding-Related Bullying

Bullying involving discriminatory abuse, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, threats, exploitation, serious violence or other safeguarding concerns requires safeguarding oversight. The DSL/DDSL determines whether external referral or additional protective action is required.

The school will not dismiss harmful conduct as 'banter', 'joking' or a normal part of growing up where the behaviour causes harm, targets a protected/personal characteristic or creates a hostile or unsafe environment.

17. Students of Determination and Other Vulnerable Students

Students of Determination, students with communication differences, EAL learners and other vulnerable students may be at increased risk of bullying or may find it more difficult to report concerns. Staff must provide accessible reporting routes and avoid assuming that distress, behaviour or social difficulty is simply part of a student's additional need.

Where a student displaying harmful behaviour has SEND/SOD or another additional need, the school will make reasonable adjustments to intervention and communication while maintaining the right of other students to safety.

18. Parent Partnership

- Parents should report concerns promptly and provide relevant factual information or evidence.
- Parents should avoid confronting another child or family directly on school premises or through online channels.
- Parents should not post allegations, student names, images or confidential school matters on social media.
- Parents are expected to attend meetings and cooperate with agreed safety, behaviour and support plans.
- The school will keep parents appropriately informed while respecting the confidentiality and privacy of other students.

- The school cannot normally disclose another student's confidential disciplinary, safeguarding or personal information.

19. Confidentiality

Bullying concerns are handled sensitively and information is shared on a need-to-know basis. Confidentiality does not prevent the school from sharing information where necessary to protect a child. Staff, students and parents must respect the privacy of all students involved.

20. Roles and Responsibilities

20.1 Principal

- Ensure effective implementation, resourcing, monitoring and annual review.
- Ensure serious or repeated cases receive appropriate leadership oversight.
- Authorise formal disciplinary action where required under school procedures.
- Ensure policy alignment with safeguarding, inclusion and behaviour procedures.

20.2 DSL / DDSL

- Provide safeguarding oversight where bullying involves risk of significant harm, peer-on-peer abuse or another safeguarding concern.
- Ensure safeguarding records/referrals are completed where required.
- Advise staff on protective action, parent contact and external referral.

20.3 Vice Principal / Heads of Section / Pastoral Leaders

- Coordinate investigation and response to reported bullying.
- Ensure incidents, findings, actions and follow-up are documented.
- Coordinate parent communication, student support and behaviour intervention.
- Monitor repeated cases and patterns.

20.4 Teachers and Staff

- Model respectful behaviour and challenge unkind, discriminatory or intimidating conduct.
- Maintain active supervision and respond promptly to concerns.
- Record and report suspected bullying through the agreed process.
- Implement agreed safety, support and behaviour strategies.
- Never dismiss a report as trivial without appropriate consideration.

20.5 Counselling / Wellbeing / Inclusion Team

- Provide targeted support and intervention where required.
- Contribute to assessment of vulnerability, underlying need and reasonable adjustments.
- Support reintegration, relationship repair and monitoring where appropriate.

20.6 Students

- Treat others with respect and kindness.
- Report bullying or unsafe behaviour affecting themselves or others.

- Do not participate in, encourage, record for entertainment, share or repost bullying.
- Cooperate honestly with investigations and support plans.

20.7 Parents

- Reinforce respectful behaviour and responsible online conduct.
- Report concerns promptly and factually.
- Work constructively with the school on agreed actions and support.

21. Escalation and External Referral

Repeated or severe cases are escalated to senior leadership and the Principal. Where conduct may constitute a safeguarding concern, serious threat, criminal matter or other issue requiring external intervention, the DSL/Principal will follow the applicable safeguarding and external reporting procedures. External referral is determined by the nature and risk of the concern rather than used as an automatic consequence for every bullying incident. Where an incident requires external child protection escalation, the school reports the matter through statutory channels, including the Ministry of Interior Child Protection Centre (Hotline: 116111 / Hemayati App), Dubai Police (901 / e-Crime), or the Community Development Authority (CDA) as appropriate.

22. Follow-Up and Closure

A bullying case is not considered resolved merely because an initial consequence has been issued.

- The school checks that the behaviour has stopped.
- The student who experienced bullying is asked whether they feel safe and supported.
- Any retaliation or recurrence is addressed immediately.
- Behaviour/support plans are reviewed for impact.
- Parents are updated appropriately.
- The case is closed only when required actions are complete, while relevant records remain securely retained.

23. Recording and Monitoring

The school maintains appropriate records of reported bullying, investigations, outcomes, interventions and follow-up. Behaviour and safeguarding systems are used according to the nature of the concern.

- type of bullying or alleged bullying;
- date, time and location;
- students involved and witnesses;
- online/offline context;
- whether discriminatory, safeguarding or SEND/SOD factors are relevant;
- actions and consequences;
- parent communication;
- support provided;
- recurrence and follow-up outcome.

Leaders analyse bullying data at least termly to identify trends, repeated students, locations, times, types of bullying, vulnerable groups and the impact of interventions. Findings inform supervision, curriculum, staff training, student education and school improvement.

24. Student Voice and Evaluation

- Student surveys and/or focus groups are used to understand whether students feel safe and know how to report bullying.
- Student Council, peer mentors or ambassadors may contribute to prevention initiatives.
- Feedback from students, parents and staff informs policy review and prevention planning.
- The school evaluates not only the number of reported incidents but also reporting confidence, recurrence, resolution and student perception of safety.

25. Related Policies

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Online Safety / ICT Acceptable Use procedures
- Attendance & Punctuality Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Student Wellbeing procedures
- Transport procedures
- Staff Code of Conduct

26. Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored throughout the academic year and formally reviewed annually. It will be updated earlier where required by changes in school practice, safeguarding expectations, applicable UAE/KHDA requirements or lessons learned from significant incidents. Feedback from students, parents and staff will inform review.

APPENDIX 1 - STUDENT REPORTING ROUTES

Students should report bullying or unsafe behaviour to any trusted adult. This may include a class/form teacher, subject teacher, supervisor, counsellor, Head of Section, DSL/DDSL or senior leader. Where an approved anonymous reporting mechanism is available, students may also use it. Students should seek immediate adult help where they or another student are in danger.

APPENDIX 2 - APPROVAL

Approved by	Principal / School Management
Approval Date	August-2026
Effective From	Academic Year 2026–27
Review Date	August 2027 or earlier if required