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# THE ENGLISH COLLEGE IN PRAGUE

# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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**Anti-Bullying Policy**

The English College aims to create a community in which relationships are based on trust and mutual respect. Each member of the College has the right to be valued as an individual and **not** to be bullied or abused in any way. Bullying and abuse at the College is fortunately rare, but, if it happens, it must be brought out into the open to demonstrate that abusive and inappropriate behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

**General Definition of Bullying**

Types of bullying include repeated unpleasant behaviour such as hitting, pushing, tripping someone up, harassment or intimidation, other forms of anti-social or devaluing behaviour, such as calling someone offensive names, teasing or making fun of them, interfering with their possessions, not talking to them or excluding them from a group of friends, etc.

**Cyberbullying**

> *"Cyberbullying 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 him or herself."*
>
> Report to the Anti-Bullying Alliance by Goldsmiths College, University of London.

The mobile, internet and wireless technologies provide increasing opportunities for misuse through 'cyberbullying'. It is crucial that students use their devices and the internet safely and positively, and that they are made aware of the consequences of misuse.

Unlike other forms of bullying and abuse, cyberbullying can follow children into their private spaces outside school and outside school hours. Cyberbullying activity can be communicated to a wide audience with remarkable speed, and with those guilty of such behaviour often remaining unseen and unidentifiable.

**<u>Types of Cyberbullying include:</u>**

- Text and instant message bullying involving sending unwelcome texts that are threatening, inappropriate or cause harm and discomfort.
- Picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone cameras used to make the person being bullied feel threatened or embarrassed, with images often sent to other people.

- Phone-call bullying via mobile phone using silent calls or abusive messages. Sometimes the bullied person's phone is stolen and used to harass others, who then think the phone owner is responsible. The perpetrators often disguise their numbers, sometimes using someone else's phone to avoid being identified.
- Email bullying using email to send bullying or threatening messages, often using a pseudonym for anonymity or using someone else's name to pin the blame on them.
- Chat room bullying involving sending menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room.
- Bullying through instant messaging (IM) as an internet-based form of bullying where children are sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real-time conversations online.
- Bullying via websites including the use of defamatory blogs, personal websites etc.
- Use of sexually inappropriate and unsolicited messages, sometimes known as sexting, is highly likely to fall under the definition of cyberbullying and almost always devaluing in its nature even if no objection is raised by the recipient of such messages. If discovered it will be treated with similar gravity to other types of bullying and cyberbullying. In many cases, sending sexual content whether it is text or images will be in contravention to the law in the Czech Republic.

Mobile phones, cameras or other devices must not be used to record, videotape or take photos of teachers or their lessons without the teachers' explicit permission. No information or material connected with the College may be placed on any social media platforms, or other public websites, or supplied to the media, without the permission of the Headmaster.

Cyberbullying and online abuse is a significant issue for many young people. School staff, parents and students need to work together to prevent this and to tackle it whenever it occurs. If it occurs, it will be treated in the same way as other forms of bullying.

**What to do if you think bullying or cyberbullying is taking place**

If a student feels unhappy because someone has been unkind, abusive or threatening, he or she should tell a friend, a parent, a teacher or a tutor. The bullying must not be allowed to continue. Parents should inform the College if they suspect or know that their son or daughter is a victim of bullying or abuse. In the unlikely event of a student's feeling that he/she is being bullied by a member of staff, the student should see the Headmaster or one of the Designated Safeguarding Officers.

**Signs of Bullying**

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to attend school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually poor work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags, money and other belongings suddenly go "missing", or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self-confidence
- Frequent visits to the Quiet Room with symptoms which may relate to stress or anxiety, such as stomach pains or headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance or late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults rather than peers
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping or experiencing nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away from home or school

**School Response**

Teachers hearing about or witnessing any form of bullying or abuse towards another student must take immediate action to stop such behaviour and report through the Safeguarding and Child Protection form. Whenever legally permitted by the school, the school will actively engage with instances of bullying even if it is perpetrated off the school site or out of school-time. This particularly applies to cyberbullying and online abuse.

The College will attempt to solve the problem by mediation between those concerned. Any students directly affected may be invited to see the pastoral staff and parents will be informed. Should the bullying be serious or if the problem cannot be solved through mediation, then the perpetrator is likely to be subject to the College's disciplinary procedures and or involvement with social services and the police.