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Anti-Bullying Policy 2026-2029

Reviewer: DBS / February 2026

Approved by Governors (Education Committee) 5.3.2026

Next review date: Summer 2029

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1. Core Principles and Objectives

The English College in Prague (ECP) is committed to a **"Whole School Approach"** where all pupils and staff thrive in a safe, disciplined environment. We believe that prevention and intervention are a collective responsibility, anchored in our four core pillars:

- **Humanity & Freedom:** We lead with empathy, recognising the inherent dignity of every person and ensuring the right of every pupil to learn and grow free from fear, harassment, or intimidation.
- **Honesty & Responsibility:** We build mutual trust through integrity and expect every member of our community to take ownership of their choices and the impact those actions have on others.

The goal of this policy is to provide a clear framework for understanding, preventing, and responding to bullying. By fostering a culture of trust and mutual respect, ECP ensures that every individual is valued, protected, and empowered to succeed.

1.1 Legal and Institutional Responsibility

This policy complies with Czech Act No. 561/2004 (**Education Act**) and follows the **MŠMT Methodological Guidelines**. Recognising our status as a British International School, we also incorporate UK best practice from the **DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" (2017)** and the **Equality Act 2010**.

- **Safety Mandate:** The school has a legal responsibility to maintain a safe environment, protect students' health, and prevent all forms of risky behaviour, including bullying.
- **Staff Protection:** The Headmaster is responsible for the safety and health of employees, which includes preventing bullying directed at teachers.
- **Zero Tolerance:** Abusive and inappropriate behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated; it must be brought into the open when it occurs.

1.2 Prejudice-Based Bullying

The college explicitly rejects bullying motivated by real or perceived differences, including:

- Race, religion, or nationality.
- Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND).
- Sexual orientation (LGBTQ+) or gender identity.
- Appearance or health conditions.



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1.3 Policy Development and Stakeholder Engagement

We ensure the policy remains relevant by:

- Gathering "Pupil Voice" through the **Student Council** and annual anonymous wellbeing surveys.
- Consulting with parents through **ECPA Parent Forums** and feedback on draft versions.
- Reviewing anonymised bullying data termly at Senior Leadership Team and/or Senior Pastoral Team meetings, to identify trends and adjust prevention strategies.

2. Defining Bullying, Abuse, and Discrimination

Expert guidance suggests a clear distinction between repeated bullying and single, significant acts of abuse.

Bullying: Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that hurts another physically or emotionally.

Experience vs. Intent: The College acknowledges that while bullying is often intentional, behaviour may also be experienced as bullying by the target even if the instigator claims it was "just a joke" or "banter". The College will judge incidents based on their actual impact on the victim's dignity and wellbeing.

Abuse: A single, significant incident—such as sexual violence, serious physical assault, or extreme public humiliation—that causes harm or affects a victim's development. Such acts are treated with immediate severity, even if they have not been "repeated over time".

2.1 Key Characteristics of Bullying

- **Repetition:** The behaviour is typically repeated over time, though even a single serious incident may warrant intervention.
- **Intent:** It involves a conscious, intentional, and often hidden effort to cause physical, emotional, social, or professional harm.
- **Power Imbalance:** It is characterised by an imbalance of power

2.2 Types of Bullying

- **Direct Physical:** Hitting, pushing, spitting, or inappropriate touching.
- **Direct Verbal:** Insults, threats, and hurtful comments regarding race, religion, appearance, or sexuality.



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- **Indirect/Social:** Spreading rumors, social isolation (ignoring or excluding), and damaging a person's reputation.
- **Transphobic:** Bullying based on a person's gender identity or gender expression. This is distinct from verbal bullying regarding sexuality as it targets who a person is and how they choose to present their gender, rather than their sexual orientation.
- **Cyberbullying:** Using digital tools (social media, SMS, email) to send threats or share demeaning content. Cyberbullying is unique because it can occur anywhere at any time and has a much larger potential audience.

2.3 What Bullying is Not

Bullying is distinguished from "teasing" or "single-event aggression" by the victim's inability to stop the behaviour or defend themselves. If a student cannot stop the behaviour and feels helpless, it has escalated into bullying.

2.4 The Consequences of Bullying

The College recognises that the effects of bullying can be devastating and long-lasting, often continuing into adulthood. Amongst other things, bullying may cause:

- Low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression.
- Social isolation and difficulty in forming long-lasting relationships.
- Lower academic achievement due to a barrier to learning.
- Serious risks to physical and mental health, including self-harm.
- Aversion to attending school.
- Witnesses to bullying (bystanders) may also become fearful themselves.

3. Preventative Measures

Effective prevention significantly reduces the occurrence of bullying.

3.1 Preventative Measures: Our Beliefs in Action

We proactively prevent bullying by fostering a culture that celebrates diversity and connection:

- **Relationships:** We nurture connections between pupils, staff, and parents to ensure a secure community where everyone feels they belong.



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- **Open-mindedness & Thinking Internationally:** We challenge prejudice-based bullying by valuing diverse perspectives and respecting all cultures and beliefs. We believe that an inclusive environment is a safer environment.
- **Talents & Academic Aspiration:** By celebrating individual potential and pursuing excellence, we create a culture where being "different" is seen as a strength, reducing the likelihood of pupils being targeted for their uniqueness.

3.2 Clear rules

All procedures must be formalised in the **School Code**, **School Prevention Program**, and **Crisis Plans**. These documents define the roles of tutors, specialists, and the specific corrective measures to be taken when bullying is identified.

3.3 Early Identification and Monitoring

The College uses iSAMS to log "ECP Expectations". By tracking "Low-Level" breaches in the Respect and Technology categories (e.g., derogatory language or inappropriate phone use), the Pastoral Team can identify patterns of behaviour before they escalate into bullying.

- **Regular Monitoring:** iSAMS Wellbeing Module alerts pastoral staff to patterns, to identify early symptoms of bullying.
- **Strategic Timing:** Monitoring takes place throughout the school year to enable implementation of preventive measures.
- **Safety Mapping:** Reports raised by individuals, the Student Council, Staff Association or other means are used to identify specific physical locations in the school where students or teachers feel unsafe.

3.4 Protective Factors

- **Strong teacher-student relationships**, reinforced through the School Values and communicated regularly and through messaging in every classroom.
- **Open communication with parents**, through fostering a strong connection with the tutor as the first point of contact. Further reinforced through parent events, parent teacher evenings, ECPA Parent Forums: that all encourage an open dialogue
- **Clear school strategy** against bullying.
- **Mobile Technology (The "Off and Away" Rule)**, to minimise the "background noise" of social media and reduce cyberbullying, ECP enforces an **"Off and Away All Day"** rule for Years 1–4,



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with restricted zones for older pupils. Misuse of personal technology is logged immediately on iSAMS to protect the learning environment.

3.5 Staff Training and Awareness

To ensure a consistent "Whole School Approach," the College provides:

- Annual anti-bullying training for all staff as part of the start of year safeguarding training.
- Specialist training on recognising and tackling prejudice-based bullying, including LGBTQ+ and SEND-specific issues.
- Regular briefings on using iSAMS to log "Low Level" behaviours to ensure early intervention.

4. Response and Intervention Framework

The English College in Prague acts firmly and consistently to ensure that any breach of our community standards—particularly **Humanity** and **Responsibility**—is addressed. Our intervention framework is designed to protect the victim immediately, investigate with integrity, and use our digital management systems to monitor and prevent recurrence.

4.1 Immediate Action and Triage

- **Safety First:** Any member of staff witnessing an act of unkindness, abuse, or bullying must intervene immediately to stop the behaviour and ensure the victim is safe.
- **Initial Recording:** All concerns must be recorded promptly on **MyConcern**. If a pupil reports via caring@englishcollege.cz, the Pastoral Team will acknowledge the report within 24 hours.
- **Legal Triage (Czech Law Compliance):** Before an internal investigation begins, the DSL/Headmaster will determine if the incident constitutes a potential crime (e.g., serious physical assault, distribution of illegal imagery, or extreme harassment). In such cases, the school will **not** conduct an internal investigation but will immediately defer to the **Police of the Czech Republic** and **OSPOD**.

4.2 The "Upstander" and Reporting Responsibility

- **Upstander Culture:** We expect pupils to take **responsibility** for their community. Pupils who witness bullying or abuse are expected to intervene safely or report it immediately.
- **Passive Bystanding:** In line with UK best practice, the College reserves the right to apply sanctions to passive bystanders who witness serious incidents and choose not to report them. Remaining silent may be interpreted as silent consent or involvement in the offence.



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4.3 Investigation Protocol: Experience vs. Intent

The College conducts investigations with neutrality and transparency:

- **The Target's Experience:** We recognise that behaviour can be experienced as bullying or harassment even if the instigator claims it was "just a joke" or "banter." Investigations focus on the impact on the target's dignity and the violation of ECP expectations.
- **Interviewing Standards:** Victims and witnesses are interviewed separately and with empathy. To protect all parties, direct confrontation between the victim and the accused is **strictly prohibited** during the evidence-gathering phase. Statements should be recorded accurately, ideally in writing with the pupil's signature.
- **Independent Witness:** To ensure the integrity of the investigation and the safeguarding of all parties, any formal interview with a student regarding a suspected breach of this policy must be conducted in the presence of an independent adult witness (a member of staff not directly involved in the incident).

4.4 Resolution: Methods of Intervention

Depending on the severity and frequency of the behaviour (Bullying vs. a single act of Abuse), the school will employ:

- **The Method of Reconciliation:** For lower-level conflicts where both parties are willing to engage in a supervised restorative dialogue to repair the relationship.
- **The Method of External Pressure:** For serious or persistent bullying. This involves a formal Educational Committee, the involvement of parents, and clear disciplinary warnings.

4.5 Disciplinary Action and Victimisation

- **Sanctions:** Consequences are applied via the **School Code**, ranging from House Reprimands to Conditional or Full Expulsion.
- **Protection from Victimisation (Retaliation):** The College has zero tolerance for retaliation against those who report bullying. Any pupil who targets an "Upstander" or a victim for speaking up will face **Serious Breach** sanctions as an independent and separate offence.

4.6 Restorative Practice and Reflection

Sanctions alone do not change culture. Following a disciplinary outcome, the school ensures a path back to positive participation in the community:

- **Guided Reflection:** The pupil involved will be required to engage in a guided reflection on their conduct and its impact on the community. This process, facilitated by a member of the **Pastoral**



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Team, ensures that the student understands why their behaviour was unacceptable and how to align with school expectations in the future.

- **Support:** The victim will be offered ongoing support, which may include "Safety Mapping" (identifying areas of the school where they feel vulnerable), counseling and/or sessions with the School Psychologist if required.

4.7 Monitoring and Recording (The Bullying Log)

- **Centralised Recording:** A formal record of all bullying, abuse, and discrimination incidents is maintained through specific categorisation within **MyConcern** and **iSAMS**.
- **Data Analysis:** This categorisation serves as the school's "Bullying Log," allowing the Pastoral team to track individual progress, identify trends (e.g., by year group or location), and ensure that interventions have been successful.
- **Reporting:** Anonymised data from these records is used to provide reports to the **Governing Body** in the Autumn, ensuring high-level oversight of the school's behaviour culture.

5. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying involves aggression via information technology (social media, SMS, email). It is unique due to its 24/7 nature and potential for a massive audience.

5.1 Types of Cyberbullying

Text and instant message bullying involving sending unwelcome texts that are threatening, inappropriate or cause harm and discomfort.

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **Chat room** bullying involving sending menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room.
5. **Instant messaging (IM)** as an internet-based form of bullying where children are sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real-time conversations online.
6. **Websites** including the use of defamatory blogs, personal websites etc.



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7. **Sexually inappropriate** and unsolicited messages, sometimes known as sexting, are 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.

5.2 Victim Best Practices

- **Preserve Evidence:** Save screenshots, emails, and chat logs before content is deleted.
- **End Communication:** Do not engage, threaten, or seek revenge against the attacker.
- **Block and Report:** Use platform tools to block the offender and report the attack to a trusted adult.

5.3 School Response to Cyberbullying

- **Stop the Attack:** Work with IT specialists or service providers to remove humiliating content or block profiles.
- **Evidence Collection:** Snapshots and profile links must be secured before content is removed to assist in the investigation.
- **Anonymization:** Ensure the safety of witnesses by removing their names from public documentation during the investigation.

Education: For less serious forms, the school may implement "Project Days" or lectures on responsible technology use.

6. Disciplinary and Legal Aspects

6.1 School-Level Consequences

Following an Educational Committee decision, sanctions may include:

- Tutor or Headmaster reprimands.
- Lowered marks for behaviour (2 or 3).
- Transfer to another class.
- Conditional or full expulsion.



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6.2 Mandatory Reporting

The school has a mandatory reporting obligation in the following cases:

- **Notification of Legal Guardians:** If bullying occurs during lessons or related activities, the school is **obliged** to notify the legal guardians of both the **aggressor** and the **victim**. This stems from the Education Act (§ 21, para. 2), as bullying is considered a significant event in a child's education.
- **Reporting to Social Services (OSPOD):** The school reports facts suggesting a child is at risk (either from others or their own behaviour). This includes all cases reported to the police and cases where no legal reason for police involvement exists but the situation remains serious.
 - **Case Conferences:** If a school representative is invited to an OSPOD case conference, they are **legally bound by strict confidentiality**. Information learned there must not be shared, even within the school premises.
- **Police of the Czech Republic:** If bullying involves conduct that may constitute a **misdemeanor or a criminal offense**, the school contacts the Police or the Public Prosecutor's Office. The Headmaster or an authorized person serves as the "reporter" and has the right to be notified of the progress within one month.

6.3 Supporting the Victim

The College recognises that the impact of bullying can be severe. Support may include counseling, referral to the school psychologist, "Safety Mapping" of the school site, or temporary separate provision.

6.4 Values-Based Reflection

When bullying occurs, our disciplinary process includes a restorative element. Pupils involved will be asked to reflect on how their actions have detracted from our values of **Humanity** and **Responsibility**. This reflection helps the aggressor understand that bullying is not just a breach of the "School Code," but a failure to uphold the standards we stand for as a College.

6.5 Bullying Directed at Staff

School staff, leaders, and governors all have the right to a career free from harassment. The English College in Prague does not tolerate the bullying or harassment of staff by pupils, parents, or colleagues.

- Bullying of staff via social media (cyberbullying) is treated with the same gravity as face-to-face abuse.
- Incidents involving pupils bullying staff will be dealt with quickly, via the **School Code** and the **ECP Expectations** framework.



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- Incidents involving parents or colleagues will be escalated to the **Headmaster** and managed under the Staff Conduct or Parental Complaints procedures.
- If required, the college will take action, such as requesting the removal of offensive online content or seeking legal advice if content is threatening or abusive.

6.6 Protection from Victimisation and Retaliation

In line with UK best practice, ECP protects the right of all community members to report concerns without fear of reprisal.

Definition: Victimisation is any retaliation against a person who has made a complaint or supported someone else's complaint about bullying or abuse.

Consequences: Any pupil who targets an "Upstander" or a victim for reporting an incident will face extremely serious sanctions, up to and including conditional or full expulsion. This is sanctioned as an independent offence, separate from the initial allegation.

6.7 Staff Conduct and Transferable Risk

Professional Standards: Bullying or harassment of pupils by staff is a matter of professional conduct and is managed under the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**.

Transferable Risk: We apply the principle of "transferable risk". If a staff member's behaviour—even outside of a criminal threshold—indicates they may be unsuitable to work with children, it will be treated with the highest level of severity.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy is measured through a robust evaluation cycle:

- **Data Analysis:** The Pastoral Team reviews iSAMS and MyConcern data termly to identify "hot spots" in the school or specific cohorts requiring intervention.
- **Annual Audit:** We use the Behaviour Culture Audit Tool to facilitate a formal assessment of our social norms and systems.
- **Reporting:** A summary report on anti-bullying trends and the impact of our prevention programmes is presented to the Governing Body annually.

8. Links to Other Documents & Policies

The Anti-Bullying Policy operates in conjunction with other key policies and documents that together ensure a comprehensive approach to the safety and welfare of students at the English College in Prague.



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This policy should be read alongside:

- [School Code](#): For specific disciplinary sanctions.
- [Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy](#): For incidents reaching the threshold of "significant harm".
- [Mobile Phone & Personal Technology Policy](#): Regarding digital conduct. At the time of writing this is in a trial phase, but provides the standard for current technology expectations

