



Anti-Bullying, Discrimination, and Harassment Policy – Primary and Lower Secondary

We wish to create an environment in the Primary and Lower Secondary department of the European School Copenhagen, where community and our values of respect, collaboration, and empathy guide our actions.

We want to maintain a fruitful learning environment where we can fulfil our mission to create educated, lifelong learners, and responsible global citizens.

We want a school where everyone thrives and belongs, and no one feels lonely or excluded from the community.

We take bullying, discrimination and harassment very seriously, and we do not tolerate bullying, discrimination, and harassment. Bullying can cause serious and long-lasting damage to the students' health, wellbeing and learning. It can, for example, lead to a higher risk of stress, anxiety, depression, and prolonged absences from school.

We work actively to create safe school communities and prevent bullying. If the school, the child, or the parents suspect bullying in school, the school is obligated to investigate and take the necessary actions.

This policy sets the school's position on bullying, discrimination and harassment and is informed by the relevant legislation and research.

This policy addresses the following questions:

1. What is bullying?
2. What is harassment?
3. What is discrimination?
4. How do we work with inclusive and safe school communities?
5. What do we do if bullying, discrimination or harassment occurs?

1. What is bullying?

Bullying consists of repetitive acts of exclusion that typically occur in communities lacking unity or with low tolerance. The consequence is that a child (or adult) is ostracised from the community. Bullying is the result of dysfunctional group dynamics. It is not the case that one child is responsible for the problem, but rather that a problem exists within the child's community.

The reasons for bullying can be varied, and it is not always a deliberate act. To avoid bullying, safe and tolerant communities must be built.





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Bullying can be direct (e.g. physical contact, facial expressions or verbal degradation) or indirect (e.g. gossip, slander, or isolation). Bullying can occur face to face, or it can take the form of digital or cyber bullying.

Digital bullying

The term digital bullying covers abusive, degrading, or exclusionary acts that children and young people are exposed to through social media. Digital bullying differs from traditional bullying in the following ways:

- There is a certain anonymity in social media, which creates a lot of uncertainty among students, as the sender can be anonymous or unknown.
- Digital bullying can occur 24 hours a day and is not limited to the schoolyard during school hours.
- The exposure to digital bullying is particularly problematic because you do not know how many people have seen the offensive comments or pictures, and because you can't always delete them.

To avoid digital bullying, safe and tolerant communities must be built outside of social media. Additionally, it is crucial to strengthen students' digital education, especially regarding the ethical dilemmas they may encounter and promoting sensible behaviour in the digital world. It is the shared responsibility of the school and of the parents to educate their child on digital etiquette and use of social media.

Conflicts or bullying

It is important to distinguish between conflicts and bullying. Conflicts are a normal part of life, and we should aim to give the children tools for handling conflicts in an appropriate way. Bullying is, as stated above, when there are repetitive acts of exclusion.

DCUM (*Dansk Center for Undervisningsmiljø*) describes 8 signs of bullying:

- 1) Teasing is no longer fun for all parties
 - a. It no longer arises in isolated and spontaneous situations, but instead, it excludes one or more individuals from the community.
 - b. Beware of repetitive teasing justified by "it's just for fun," as it may overlook existing or emerging bullying.
- 2) Conflicts can no longer be resolved
 - a. Conflicts which exclude one or more persons from the community
- 3) Acts of expulsion become systematic
 - a. Ostracism ceases to be isolated, and the fear of being ostracized leads students to ostracize others themselves.
- 4) Insecurity pervades the community





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- a. There's a pervasive tension among students, with each keeping a wary eye on the others.
- 5) The community exhibits a low tolerance towards each other
 - a. There's little room for diversity within the group.
 - b. The community lacks a unifying positive force, resulting in a harsh tone among students.
- 6) Empathy is lacking
 - a. Degrading actions are tolerated within the student group, with indifference towards those excluded.
- 7) Power imbalance exists
 - a. Some students are deemed more valuable than others, and this is accepted.
- 8) Loneliness among students persists
 - a. Pupils withdraw socially and academically, often wandering alone and not engaging in digital communities.

2. What is harassment?

Harassment is when the bullying is so severe, persistent or targeted at a person/people that it hinders their ability to get an education, significantly harms their well-being, or substantially interferes with their rights.

Sexual harassment is a particular form of harassment, where behaviours are committed because of a person's gender or sex. Some examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sharing sexualized photographs or making comments of a sexual nature about a student to other classmates, including on social media (e.g. spreading sexual rumours or comments about a student's body)
- Making sexual jokes, comments, or questions
- Invading someone's personal space in a sexual manner
- Inappropriate sexual touching or gestures
- Physical abuse
- Pressure to perform sexual acts or have sex
- Verbal abuse using anti-gay or sex-based insults
- Stalking or repeated unwanted messages

3. What is discrimination?

Discrimination is when someone is treated differently because they belong to a particular group of people or have a particular characteristic. Bullying or harassment can be especially harmful when it is linked to discrimination.

It is the school's policy that no student or staff shall be treated less favourably on the basis of race, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.





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4. How do we work with inclusive and safe school communities?

In school and after school care we work on creating inclusive and safe communities as well as having a focus on the wellbeing of individual children. Among different initiatives we work with:

- Collecting data on wellbeing; individual conversations using different tools and using klassetrivsel.dk
- Consultation and actions through our Resource Center
- Teaching methods of conflict resolution
- Teaching appropriate language
- Teaching digital awareness
- Playgroups in and after school
- Class charters
- Communication between home and school/ASC
- Setting expectations of ways to ensure safe school communities:
 - We distinguish between "teasing for fun" and "teasing for real"
 - We need to be able to express ourselves when we feel that people have overstepped our boundaries
 - We reject bullying and involve a contact person (see below) if we suspect bullying
 - We do not ignore or exclude a person e.g. by not talking to him/her
 - We speak properly to each other and do not use offensive or hurtful language, including condescending nicknames
 - We demonstrate good online behaviour by avoiding using offensive or hurtful language on social media; by not accessing other people's online profiles; and by not sharing pictures of others without their permission

All classes have a "class team" consisting of the class teacher and a pedagogue (N-P3) or other teachers in the class/year level. The team around a class is responsible for working on a safe and inclusive learning environment as well as raising and addressing concerns regarding wellbeing in the class.

5. What do we do if bullying, discrimination or harassment occurs?

Earlier, bullying was understood as a phenomenon that occurs due to individuals and their personalities. Today, all research shows that bullying should be understood as a phenomenon that occurs in groups that due to insecurity and fear of social exclusion ostracises certain others to establish security and order. When bullying occurs, it is a part of a dysfunctional social dynamic, and the process of changing this social dynamic is complex and takes time.

If we experience or observe acts of bullying, discrimination or harassment, we act promptly. We work with Stine Kaplan Jørgensen's model for handling cases of bullying:





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By law, the school is obliged to act within 10 working days. If bullying is suspected, the first action taken by the school is an investigation of the situation, gathering data, and analysing these. After this, the team agrees on appropriate actions to take. These are implemented in the relevant class/group of students and evaluated at an agreed time. New data is collected and analysed to see if further action is needed.

Both school staff, students, and parents should be attentive of the social environment and call attention to suspicions of bullying. Reports of bullying, discrimination, or harassment can be made to several people, including:

- Students in the Right Respecting Council
- The class teacher or pedagogue
- One of the teachers in the class
- The study counsellor
- Inclusion pedagogue
- School management

Management and inclusion pedagogue must be informed and involved as soon as the bullying, discrimination, or harassment is detected and reported.

It is the responsibility of the adults at school and at home to help the children act with competence and kindness in our school community. We aim to take pedagogical measures to aid the children in their development and wellbeing. If deemed appropriate, sanctions can be made after an individual assessment as stated in the law *Bekendtgørelse om fremme af god orden i folkeskolen* ([Retsinformation](#)).





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Communication

As a school, we will communicate relevant information on finds and actions taken to individual parents and groups of parents. We are obligated to respect the confidentiality of sensitive information regarding a child, unless consent has been given by their parents. We request that parents speak respectfully and maintain good tone about the other children and their families when speaking to your own children. Assigning a negative character to a child or a family negatively impacts the class wellbeing and the dynamic amongst the children.

December 2024



European School Copenhagen

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