

# VANAREAL GRACELAND ACADEMY

Abacha Road Mararaba



## Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Procedures

<b>Policy Number</b>	O2 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Procedures
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<b>Acknowledgement(s)</b>	All staff
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## Document Information

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### Document history

Version no.	Date	Change
1.0	June 2024	Registration procedures & system updated. Update of contact systems

### Approvals

Role	Name	Signature / Approval	Date
Head of School (Admin)			
Head of School (Academy)			
Director Acedemy	Esther Ochiekwu		
School Board			

## **1. Introduction and Context**

We are committed to meeting our Student Duty of Care obligations.

## **2. Purpose and Objectives**

This Policy describes Vanareal Graceland Academy's strategies to prevent students from bullying other students, and how incidents of bullying are to be managed.

## **3. Scope and Application**

This Policy applies to all School activities, including camps and excursions.

It also applies outside of school hours and off School premises where students have been involved and there is a clear and close connection to the School.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff are responsible for:

- modelling appropriate behaviour at all times
- dealing with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this Policy
- ensuring that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately
- being vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either students who persistently bully or are persistently bullied
- considering whether any behaviour gives rise to concerns that the student exhibiting the behaviour and/or the student subject to the behaviour may be experiencing child abuse or other harm, and, if so, follows the School's procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns
- acknowledging the right of parents/carers to speak with the School if they believe their child is being bullied.

## **5. Policy**

Vanareal Graceland Academy is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, to acting in students' best interests and to keeping them safe from harm.

Vanareal Graceland Academy recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the School are respected and accepted.

Bullying is not tolerated at Vanareal Graceland Academy.

It is our policy that:

- bullying be managed through a "whole-of-School community" approach involving students, staff and parents/guardians
- bullying prevention strategies are implemented within the School on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/guardians to recognise bullying and respond appropriately
- bullying response strategies are tailored to the circumstances of each incident
- we establish procedures for reporting and responding to child safety concerns, including when the behaviour may be an indicator of child abuse and other harm
- staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture
- bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

## **6. Related Procedures**

## **Bullying Prevention Strategies**

Vanareal Graceland Academy recognises that the implementation of whole-School prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a “no-bullying” culture within the School:

- A structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age-appropriate information and social and emotional competencies relating to bullying (including cyberbullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year.
- Education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies.
- Appropriate sharing among staff of information about cyberbullying incidents.
- Regular provision of information to parents/guardians, to raise awareness of bullying as a School community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying directly with the School.
- Promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/guardians.
- Promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/guardians.
- Reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/guardians and staff are encouraged, and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below).
- Students are supported by their teachers, pastoral care staff and the School leadership when they report a bullying incident and during the processes that follow the submission of the report.
- Regular risk assessments of bullying within the School are undertaken by surveying students to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff.
- Records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate.
- Statements supporting bullying prevention are included in students’ School diaries.
- Education of staff, students and parents/guardians on health conditions to promote understanding and to reduce stigma and fear.
- Anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the School.
- Promotion of student awareness and a “no-bullying” environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

## **Reporting Bullying**

Students and their parents/guardians are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse.

A key part of the School’s bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well as providing assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/guardians) that:

- bullying is not tolerated within the School
- their concerns will be taken seriously
- the School has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Bullying incidents can be advised to the School verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

- informing a trusted teacher

- informing the School Counsellor
- informing a student's year co-ordinator
- informing the Head of school or Directors

### Reporting Bullying Incidents to the School

Bullying incidents can be advised to the School verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

- informing a trusted teacher
- informing the School counsellor
- informing a student's Class or Connect Teacher and/or Heads of School

## Responding to Bullying

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts.

In all circumstances the School:

- takes bullying incidents seriously
- takes seriously, and monitors single incidents of conflict or fights between students, that do not ordinarily amount to bullying, for signs of ongoing behaviour that may be an indicator of bullying
- provides assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected
- ensures that teachers, pastoral care and School leadership staff support the student being bullied through the reporting process and the corresponding investigation and resolution processes
- involves the School Counsellor who has specialist skills in helping both students who have been bullied and students who are bullying others
- engages a Student Council, or similar, to instigate anti-bullying initiatives
- ensures that student leaders support the School's anti-bullying policy and promote anti-bullying behaviours
- takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders
- keeps parents and guardians of both the student who was bullied and the student who did the bullying, informed of the situation as and when appropriate to do so
- takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved
- maintains records of reported bullying incidents
- will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents, even if these are not necessarily repetitive

*These approaches may be used to intervene in group or relational bullying situations. They are only appropriate during the initial stages. They are not appropriate for persistent or severe bullying incidents.*

- notification of/consultation with parents/guardians
- offering counselling to persistent bullies/victims
- implementing effective follow up strategies
- disciplinary action, at the Principal's discretion, including suspension and expulsion of persistent bullies, or in cases of severe incidents.

## Signage

Anti-bullying posters may be posted in strategic locations in the School to promote appropriate behaviour and encourage students to respect individual differences and diversity.

## 7. Implementation

This Policy is implemented through a combination of:

- staff training
- student and parent/carer education and information
- involvement of external bodies and authorities as and when appropriate
- effective incident reporting procedures
- effective management of bullying incidents when reported
- the creation of a “no-bullying” culture within the School community
- effective record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

## 8. Policy Exemptions and Breaches

Where a staff member breaches this Policy Vanareal Graceland Academy will take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

## 9. Definitions

### Bullying

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- **Physical bullying** which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing or using an object to hurt or intimidate someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.
- **Verbal/written bullying:** examples include: name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.
- **Social (sometimes called relational or emotional bullying):** examples include deliberate acts of exclusion, spreading rumours or sharing information to have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person’s social reputation or social acceptance.
- **Cyberbullying** which is the misuse of power within a relationship to repeatedly threaten or harm another person using technology. **Cyberbullying behaviour** may include:
  - abusive texts and emails
  - hurtful messages, images or videos
  - imitating others online
  - excluding others online
  - humiliating others online
  - spreading nasty online gossip and chat
  - creating fake accounts or ‘avatars’ to trick someone or humiliate them.

**Cyberbullying** can occur on internet services, social media and electronic services that enable communication including, but not limited to, instant messaging, chat services, email communications, online games, SMS and MMS. It can be verbal or written and can include images, videos and/or audio.

These behaviours can also be an indicator of child abuse and other harm.

Bullying can be illegal if it involves intimidation, stalking, physical violence, threats of violence or damaging property.

### What Is not Bullying?

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

- **Mutual Conflict Situations** which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation.
- **One-Off Acts** (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

### Signs of Bullying

Major behavioural changes in a student may be indicative of bullying. Such behavioural changes may include:

- crying at night and having nightmares
- refusing to talk when asked "What's wrong?"
- having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- an unwillingness or refusal to go to school, a school organised activity or reluctance to attend other social events
- feeling ill in the mornings
- a decline in quality of school work
- becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- appearing lonely or distressed
- beginning to display bullying behaviour towards siblings
- unexpected changes in friendship groups
- acting unreasonably.

Students may also not disclose cyberbullying to adults through fear that the adults may overreact and make the situation worse. Signs of cyberbullying to watch out for may include one or more of the behavioural changes outlined above, and/or other signs, including a student:

- being upset after using the internet or their mobile phone
- being hesitant to go online, avoiding their phone or seeming nervous when an instant message, text message or email appears
- spending unusually long hours online or on their mobile phone
- becoming secretive about their online activities and mobile phone use.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the School through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a class teacher), if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

These behaviours can also be an indicator of child abuse and other harm.