



# Anti-Bullying Policy

2023/2024

*Nourishing the Human Potential*



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# Anti-Bullying Policy

As a school that promotes peace, we strive to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn with serenity.

The development of conflict resolution skills and compassion are central to Ecole Montessori Casablanca's mission, and therefore, bullying is not tolerated. Bullying is different from conflict. Conflict is an inevitable part of life, and we embrace moments of conflict as opportunities to learn valuable life skills and develop resiliency. Conflict can occur when a pupil perceives another pupil as being an obstacle to what they want or value.

If pupils are in conflict but are not bullying, EMC is committed to helping these pupils resolve conflicts, learn from them, and move on. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians too to guide these children in appropriate ways to interact with others.

## What is bullying?

Bullying is a repeated action taken by one or more pupils with the deliberate intention of hurting another pupil, either physically or emotionally. Bullying is any behaviour by one pupil (or group of pupils) to another pupil (or group of pupils) that is intimidating, threatening, violent, or hurtful in any way. It may be of a physical, verbal or social nature, or a combination of these.

It is recognised that many pupils will, in the process of developing relationships with other pupils, experiment with socially unacceptable behaviour. This does not make a pupil 'a bully' but does require an immediate and clear response from the school.

It is also recognised that name-calling and treating with violence are intimidating.

If two pupils have an occasional fight or quarrel, this is not bullying.

## Cyber-bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen anytime outside of school grounds, as mobile phones are not authorized at school.

Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others.

Cyberbullying can include, but is not limited to, the items listed below:

- Email:  
Sending harassing, threatening and / or menacing messages to targets either directly, anonymously or using another person's address or alias.



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- Short Text Messages (SMS) or WhatsApp:  
Masquerading as someone else and using that person's mobile phone or computer to send harassing or threatening messages.
- Chat Rooms / Social Media (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook):  
Harassing someone or having heated arguments (called 'flaming') in private chat rooms with the use of inappropriate / obscene language.  
  
Allowing pupils / others to anonymously write / create anything (true or untrue) or add cruel comments about someone in a worldwide forum.
- Websites / Social Networking sites:  
Mocking, teasing and harassing online, or voting online for the 'ugliest' / 'fattest' / 'dumbest' (etc.) person, or posting visuals that can be altered. (including sexually explicit material).

This form of bullying should be considered the same way as any bullying happening both inside or outside school.

### The effects of bullying

All forms of bullying are hurtful and may have a devastating effect on those who are bullied. Whilst some pupils may recover from bullying, there are others who suffer lasting consequences.

- Pupils who are bullied may see themselves as inadequate and friendless and suffer from loss of confidence and low self-esteem.
- Bullies may also suffer from long lasting consequences and if offered no support, may continue with bullying behaviour into their adult lives. For this reason, it is important that they receive support to enable them to change their behaviour.
- Witnesses to bullying can also be in distress and emotionally disturbed.

### Prevention

Our response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied.

We have an ethos of good behaviour where we expect pupils to treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. The value of respect is essentially what the Montessori philosophy revolves around, and we aim to make it a culture that extends beyond the classroom to the corridors, and beyond the school gates, and in each other's homes.

We should proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or in class meetings. Staff themselves will be able to determine what will work best for their pupils.



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## Strategies in use at EMC to address bullying

### Preventative strategies

EMC promotes positive behaviours, and the school behaviour policy makes the expectations clear to the pupils and their parents.

Individual meetings with the guides are held weekly to open the dialogue about the pupil's life at school.

Communication strategies are modelled and discussed from a very young age within our Toddler and Primary environments, that will help pupils develop their positive communication skills (positive phrasing, grace and courtesy lessons, etc).

### Spotting bullying

Much of the behaviour which leads to both bullying and intimidation is difficult to observe or can be seen as innocent when it is not. It is therefore essential that staff listen carefully to what pupils say and watch for any signs that a pupil may be being intimidated. The staff must always pass on their concern to the other members of staff working with the pupil and report these concerns to the lead teacher.

It is also important to involve the whole community in spotting and reporting any behaviour they suspect is harmful towards other pupils.

### Once a bullying incident has occurred

The pupils (victims and witnesses) are constantly encouraged to tell someone. We involve parents of all parties. If a pupil bullies another pupil or pupils:

- we show the pupils who have been bullied that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them;
- we give reassurance to the pupil or pupils who have been bullied;
- we intervene to stop the pupil who is bullying from harming the other pupil or pupils;
- we explain to the pupil doing the bullying why her/his behaviour is not acceptable;
- we help the pupil who has done the bullying to recognise the impact of their actions;
- we make sure that pupils who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practise and reflect on considerate behaviour;
- we do not label pupils who bully as 'bullies';
- we recognise that pupils who bully may be experiencing bullying themselves, or be subject to abuse or other circumstance causing them to express their feelings in negative ways towards others;
- we recognise that pupils who bully are often unable to empathise with others.



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When this is the case, we do not insist that they apologise unless it is clear that they feel genuine remorse for what they have done. Empty apologies are just as hurtful to the bullied pupil as the original behaviour.

Parents of perpetrator and victim are called for a meeting :

- we discuss what has happened with the parents of the pupil who did the bullying and work out with them a plan for handling the pupil's behaviour;
- we share what has happened with the parents of the pupil who has been bullied, explaining that the pupil who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving. We work out with them a plan for handling the pupil's ability to speak for him/herself and feel confident to seek help from an adult or a friend should it happen to them in the future.

All staff are informed and asked to particularly look out for the victim and the bully. Victims are given the space to say how they would like the incident(s) to be dealt with:

- Some prefer to talk to the bully face to face with the presence of a mediator
- Some prefer to have a member of staff deal directly with the bully
- Some just want the school to watch out for incidents at first

Once a situation has been resolved we ask bully victims and bullies how they are on a regular basis.

### **Advice to pupils about bullying**

- No-one deserves to be bullied – remember you have a right for this not to happen to you.
- If you are a victim of bullying, you can tell a member of the staff and/or your parent/carer, and/or a friend you trust (anyone you feel safe to talk to). It is the best thing to do.
- If you cannot tell anyone at school, you can tell your parents.
- Friends of victims should let staff know of bullying incidents.

### **Advice to parents/carers about bullying**

If your child is bullying or being bullied they may:

- Change their behaviour (loss/excess of sleep, loss/excess of appetite, change of mood, bed wetting, etc.)
- Be unwilling to talk about their day
- Look less happy
- Regularly come home with items that you did not provide them with
- Strongly refusing to wear something special to school (their glasses, a specific colour, or their hair in a particular way) that they willingly wear outside of school
- Take things from home without you knowing
- Avoid certain pupils or activities
- Be reluctant to go to school



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## How can parents help to prevent bullying?

- Help your child understand that everybody gets angry, they should learn to express it without hurting others
- Encourage your child to tell a member of staff straightaway if they get hurt at school
- Recognise the positive action taken by your child when they sort out problems by talking rather than hurting others
- Make immediate contact with the school at any time over suspected bullying incidents
- Do not intervene with other pupils' parents, but let the school know
- Allow the school to seek further professional advice and support over difficult bullying

## Bullying outside a school's premises

EMC pupils are expected to treat others with respect, so that we keep our school bully-free. Bullying has no place at EMC or between EMC pupils at any time. This policy applies to all interactions between EMC pupils, whether in person or through electronic communications and whether or not occurring during school or school functions or on campus.

## Sanctions

When tougher measures are needed where pupils do not respond to preventive strategies to combat bullying, EMC will need to take tougher action to deal with persistent and violent bullying. As part of our discipline policy, we have a sufficient range of sanctions to deal with this type of bullying. We ensure that the whole school community knows what sanctions will be taken. They are fairly and consistently applied.

Sanctions include:

- Withdrawal of freedom privileges
- Withholding participation in any school trip or sports events
- Fixed period suspension from school

Where serious bullying of any type is involved, the school reserves the right to permanently exclude a pupil.

## Follow-up support

The progress of both the perpetrator and the victim will be monitored by their class teachers. One-on-one sessions to discuss how the victim and perpetrator are progressing may be appropriate. If appropriate, follow-up meetings will be arranged with parents one month after the incident.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported in the following ways:

- Being listened to
- Being reassured



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- Being offered counselling, where appropriate
- Having an immediate opportunity to meet with the DSL if they choose to
- Staff, particularly the DSL, will work with the victim to build resilience. The DSL holds a formal meeting, on a monthly basis, to check whether the bullying has stopped – until the class teacher, DSL and victim are confident the bullying has stopped. The victim will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated. Pupils who have bullied others will be supported in the following ways:
  - Receiving a consequence for their actions
  - Being able to discuss what happened
  - Being helped to understand
    - what they did wrong
    - why they became involved
    - why they need to change their behaviour
  - Appropriate assistance from parents

The school acknowledges that bullying may be an indication of underlying mental health issues. The school will work with the perpetrator and their parents / carers regarding any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing problems.