مدرستنا الثانوية الإنجليزية ، الشارقة - بنات
Our Own English High School, Sharjah-Girls

GEMS EDUCATION

CYBERBULLYING POLICY

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Reviewed : May 2026

Next Review : May 2027

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Approved by: Ms. Asma Gilani, Principal & CEO

Statement of Intent

Our Own English High School (OOS) is committed to providing a **caring, friendly, and safe environment** for all students so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere, both **onsite and online**.
The school actively promotes digital safety through:

- Regular announcements during assemblies
- Circulars issued to parents by the Principal
- Periodic reminders and awareness messages
- Cyber safety talks conducted by the Principal, Vice Principal, Heads of Section, Supervisors, and Counsellors

Bullying in any form, including **cyberbullying**, is **strictly unacceptable** at OOS. All students should feel confident to report incidents, knowing that concerns will be addressed **promptly, sensitively, and effectively**. Any reported or observed incidents of cyberbullying will be immediately referred to the **Head of Section / Supervisor / Counsellor / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** for appropriate action.

What Is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is the use of **digital technologies** to intentionally hurt, threaten, harass, or humiliate another individual. This may involve messages, images, videos, or comments shared through online platforms and can cause significant emotional distress to the victim.
Cyberbullying may include, but is not limited to, the following forms:

- **Emotional bullying**
  Unfriendly behaviour, exclusion, insulting language, derogatory or defamatory remarks, spreading rumours
- **Racist bullying**
  Racial taunts, offensive comments, discriminatory images, symbols, or gestures
- **Sexual bullying**
  Sharing inappropriate sexual content, making sexually abusive comments, or sending unwanted messages
- **Homophobic bullying**
  Harassment or abuse related to sexual orientation through any online platform
- **Cyber abuse using digital devices**
  Misuse of emails, messaging apps, social media, online chat rooms, smartphones, tablets, voice notes, images, videos, threats, or calls

Why Is It Important to Respond to Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying causes emotional harm and distress. **No child deserves to be a victim**. Every student has the right to be treated with respect, dignity, and safety, including in online spaces.
Addressing cyberbullying:

- Protects students' emotional and mental wellbeing
- Reinforces positive digital citizenship
- Helps students learn appropriate online behaviour
- Promotes a safe, respectful school community

Objectives of This Policy

This policy aims to ensure that:

- All management team members, teaching and non-teaching staff, students, and parents understand what constitutes cyberbullying
- All staff are aware of the procedures to follow when cyberbullying is reported
- Students and parents know how to report incidents and seek support
- Cyberbullying concerns are treated seriously, confidentially, and fairly
- The school maintains **zero tolerance** towards cyberbullying in all forms

Signs and Symptoms of Cyberbullying

A child who is being cyberbullied may show changes in behaviour or emotional wellbeing. Parents and teachers should investigate concerns if a child:

- Appears frightened, timid, withdrawn, or anxious
- Refuses or shows reluctance to attend school
- Shows a sudden decrease or secrecy in online activity
- Displays low self-confidence or emotional distress
- Experiences sleep disturbances, nightmares, or frequent crying
- Feels physically unwell, especially in the mornings
- Shows a decline in academic performance
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive, or unusually irritable
- Bullies siblings or peers
- Avoids talking about problems or gives unlikely explanations
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile devices
- Appears nervous or jumpy when messages or notifications are received

These signs may indicate other concerns; however, cyberbullying should always be considered and investigated.

Procedures for Managing Cyberbullying Incidents

If a cyberbullying incident is observed or reported by a student, parent, or staff member, **immediate action** will be taken.

Reporting and Initial Response

- Any student reporting cyberbullying to a teacher will be supported and listened to carefully
- The incident will be reported immediately to one or more of the following:
    - Principal
    - Vice Principal
    - Head of Section
    - Supervisor
    - Online Safety Officer/Digital Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
    - Counsellor
    - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)
    - Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Investigation Process

- A committee will be formed comprising the Principal/Vice Principal/DSL/Online Safety Officer/Administrative Officer and School Counsellor
- An investigation will be conducted promptly to establish the sequence of events
- Information will be gathered from:
    - Parents
    - Class teachers
    - Supervisors
    - Students involved or reporting the incident
- The victim will be reassured, supported, and kept safe throughout the process

Action and Consequences

- The alleged student(s) will be questioned sensitively in the Principal's office
- Parents of the alleged student(s) will be formally informed and called for a meeting
- Appropriate counselling, guidance, and disciplinary action will be implemented
- Depending on the severity of the incident:
    - The student may receive a warning, counselling, or reprimand
    - Suspension from school may be imposed
- Repeated or severe incidents will be escalated to:
    - Director of Education – GEMS
    - SPEA / MOE (as applicable)

      with a recommendation for removal from school rolls if necessary

Record Keeping

- All documentation, correspondence, and reports will be securely maintained in the files of both the victim and the alleged perpetrator
- Records will be handled in accordance with safeguarding and data protection requirements

Conclusion

Cyberbullying will **not be tolerated** at OOS. The school is committed to fostering a safe digital learning environment where students feel respected, protected, and empowered to report concerns without fear.