HAMILTON
International School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Vision

Igniting Passion, Purpose and Potential

Mission

Our mission is to develop caring, lifelong learners and global citizens in a culture of excellence through an international, well-balanced education.

Our Core Values



I am Getting Better



Respectful



Resilient



Global Citizen



Communicator



Collaborator



Emotionally Intelligent

Definition of Learning

Learning at Hamilton is the purposeful, personalized process where learners get better in the good struggle zone.

Document Control Table

Status		Active – Website
Date Approved		August 2024
Latest Review Date		October 2026
To be Reviewed		Annually, or as needed
Linked Documents and Policies		Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy ISP Anti-Bullying Policy Statement Behavior Policy Counseling and Wellbeing Policy E-Safety Policy Inclusion Policy Physical Intervention Policy Staff Code of Conduct
Version	**Date**	**Comments**
Version 1 Version 2	Undated October 2026	Response procedure, cyberbullying, signs of bullying and child-on-child abuse threshold added; incident record, student-friendly version and parent guidance added; aligned with the Counseling and Wellbeing Policy and the Behavior Policy (October 2026), including Grade Leader responsibilities, fixed-term exclusion and Trusted 5

1. Rationale and Policy Aims

At Hamilton International School, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare, wellbeing, dignity and rights of all students. Bullying in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This policy aligns with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Counseling and Wellbeing Policy and Behavior Policy, and reflects our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, respectful and nurturing learning environment for every member of our community.

Bullying undermines a student's emotional wellbeing, sense of belonging and ability to learn. Addressing bullying promptly and effectively is essential to maintaining a positive school culture where students feel safe, valued and supported. This policy applies to all students from Pre-KG to Grade 12, on site, on school transport, during trips and After School Activities, and online, including incidents that happen outside school hours but affect students' wellbeing or relationships at school.

This policy aims to:

- prevent bullying through the promotion of a positive school culture and strong relationships;
- provide clear definitions and expectations regarding bullying behavior;
- ensure all members of the school community understand how to report bullying concerns;
- outline consistent procedures for responding to bullying, in line with the Behavior Policy;
- support students affected by bullying, including those who display bullying behaviors; and
- reinforce the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

2. Policy Framework

This policy reflects the ISP Anti-Bullying Policy Statement and the ISP Group Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which recognize bullying as a safeguarding matter that, if left unresolved, can become a more serious child protection issue.

The policy is underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular every child's right to be protected from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury and abuse (Article 19).

3. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional harm of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying is recognized as a safeguarding concern and, if left unaddressed, can escalate into a more serious child protection issue.

At Hamilton, we use the acronym STOP, Several Times on Purpose, to help students, staff and parents understand that bullying is not a one-off incident but repeated, intentional harm. Bullying has three key features:

- **Repeated:** it happens more than once, or there is a clear threat that it will continue.
- **Intentional:** it is deliberately hurtful.
- **An imbalance of power:** the student or group displaying the behavior has more power, whether through age, size, popularity, numbers, status or access to information or images.

A single serious incident, such as a physical assault, a threat, the sharing of an image, or discriminatory abuse, is not bullying under this definition but is never acceptable. It will be dealt with immediately under the Behavior Policy and, where relevant, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Forms of bullying

Bullying can be verbal, physical, emotional, social or online, and these forms are often combined. It can include:

- **Verbal:** name-calling, insults, threats, mocking, or saying unkind things to or about someone or their family.
- **Physical:** hitting, pushing, tripping, taking or damaging belongings, or any unwanted physical contact.
- **Emotional and social (relational):** deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumors, manipulating friendships, humiliating someone, or getting others to do the bullying.
- **Cyberbullying:** sending threatening, upsetting or abusive messages; excluding someone from group chats, games or online activities; creating or sharing embarrassing images or videos; creating fake accounts or impersonating someone; setting up groups, pages or polls to target someone.
- **Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying:** bullying linked to a student's appearance, ability, race, religion, culture, nationality, language, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, special educational needs, family circumstances, or any other perceived difference.

Relational conflict and bullying

Not all conflict between students constitutes bullying. Relational conflict usually occurs between individuals or groups of similar power and status, may be occasional, and often involves a willingness on both sides to resolve the issue and restore relationships. Conflict is a normal part of growing up, and helping students resolve it is an important part of their social and emotional learning. However, when conflict becomes intentional, repeated and involves an imbalance of power, it may develop into bullying and must be addressed accordingly.

	Relational conflict	**Bullying**
Power	Equal power between those involved	An imbalance of power
Frequency	Occasional	Repeated, Several Times on Purpose
Intent	Not usually intended to hurt	Deliberately hurtful
Response	Both sides upset and want to resolve it	One side is distressed; the other may gain something from it
School approach	Support students to resolve the conflict	Stop the behavior, protect and support, follow this policy

Bullying and child-on-child abuse

Some behavior that may be reported as bullying is child-on-child abuse and is managed under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, not only this policy. This includes physical abuse causing injury, sexual harassment or sexual violence, the non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images, upskirting, initiation or hazing rituals, and threats of serious harm. Such behavior is never dismissed as “banter”, “part of growing up” or “just having a laugh”.

4. Understanding Bullying: Start Telling

The school supports students, staff and families in recognizing and responding to bullying by reinforcing clear next steps across the school community. The same letters that define bullying also tell students what to do about it:

- **Start Telling:** bullying should never be kept a secret. Students are encouraged to start telling a trusted adult from their Trusted 5.

- **Tell an Adult:** tell an adult from your Trusted 5 (the five trusted adults each student has identified, including at least one member of staff in school), such as a teacher, homeroom teacher, Grade Leader, counselor, or a member of the Designated Safeguarding Team.
- **Others Can Help:** bullying is not something to deal with alone. Bystanders, friends and adults can support, intervene and protect.
- **Power Back:** speaking up gives power back to the person experiencing bullying.

Students are reminded regularly of these messages in lessons, assemblies, wellbeing programs, and pastoral time. A student-friendly version of this policy is provided in Appendix B.

5. Recognizing the Signs of Bullying

Students do not always tell an adult that they are being bullied. All staff should be alert to changes that may indicate bullying, including:

- unwillingness to come to school, frequent absence or late arrival;
- becoming withdrawn, anxious, unusually quiet or tearful, or showing a loss of confidence;
- a decline in the quality of work, or work or belongings that are damaged or go missing;
- frequent visits to the school nurse with headaches or stomach aches;
- unexplained cuts, bruises or torn clothing;
- choosing to stay close to adults at break and lunch times, or avoiding certain places;
- changes in friendship groups or being left out of activities;
- reluctance to use their phone or device, or distress after being online; and
- changes in sleeping or eating, as reported by parents.

There may be other explanations for these signs, but a repetition or combination of them should always be explored. Any student who talks about harming themselves, suicide or running away must not be left alone, and a counselor or DSL must be informed in person immediately. The Self-Harm and Suicide Risk procedure in Section 8 of the Counseling and Wellbeing Policy is then followed.

Bullying can happen anywhere, but staff should be particularly vigilant in places and at times where supervision is lighter, including toilets, changing rooms, corridors and stairways, playgrounds, the cafeteria, school buses, the beginning and end of the school day, and on group chats and social media.

6. Reporting Bullying

All students, parents and staff are encouraged to report immediately when bullying is suspected or observed. Reporting bullying is always the right and responsible thing to do. Bullying can be reported by:

- **Students,** about themselves or someone else, to any trusted adult in school, including an adult from their Trusted 5.
- **Parents and guardians,** to the class or homeroom teacher, Grade Leader, a school counselor, or a member of the Designated Safeguarding Team.
- **Staff,** who must record every concern on MyConcern on the same day.

Every report is taken seriously, recorded and acted upon. The school will make every effort to protect the identity of a student who reports bullying, and any form of retaliation against a student who reports bullying will be treated as a serious behavior incident. If a student or parent does not feel their concern has been dealt with, they should contact the Head of School.

7. Responding to Bullying

Our response always takes into account the needs of the student experiencing bullying, the needs of the student displaying bullying behavior, and the needs of the wider school community. We use the language “student experiencing bullying” and “student displaying bullying behavior” rather than labels, because behavior can change, and every student involved deserves support. When bullying is reported, the following steps are followed.

Step 1: Make safe and listen

The member of staff who receives the report or witnesses the behavior stops it, makes everyone safe, and reassures the student who has been targeted. They listen calmly without making promises of confidentiality, and record the concern on MyConcern the same day, noting the student’s own words.

Step 2: Assess

The Grade Leader gathers information by speaking separately with each student involved and with any witnesses, using open, non-leading questions, and asking students to write their own account where appropriate. They decide whether the behavior meets the definition of bullying or is relational conflict. If there is any indication of harm, child-on-child abuse, risk to life or a safeguarding concern, the matter is referred to a Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately and managed under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Step 3: Inform parents

The parents of all students involved are informed promptly, normally on the same day the school confirms that bullying has occurred, and are invited to meet with the Grade Leader. The school will not share details about other students beyond what is necessary.

Step 4: Act and support

The student experiencing bullying is supported through regular check-ins with a trusted adult and, where needed, a referral to the Counseling and Wellbeing team using the counseling referral process. Check-ins and Chill n' Chats do not require parental consent; consent is obtained before any weekly counseling sessions begin, in line with the Counseling and Wellbeing Policy. Practical support measures are agreed with the student, such as changes to seating, or supervision at break times or on the bus.

The student displaying bullying behavior is helped to understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility, and change their behavior. Consequences are applied in line with the Behavior Policy and are proportionate to the seriousness and persistence of the behavior. These may include restorative work, loss of privileges, internal reflection, behavior monitoring, and, for serious or persistent bullying, fixed-term exclusion or a review of the student's place at the school. Where appropriate, the student is referred to the Counseling and Wellbeing team for targeted support, such as a small-group program, to address underlying causes.

Restorative conversations between the students involved are only held when the student who experienced bullying freely agrees, feels safe to do so, and is supported by an adult. A student who has been bullied is never required to meet the student who bullied them.

The role of the school counselor

School counselors support students on both sides of a bullying incident, but they do not lead investigations or take part in decisions about consequences, so that every student can trust them. What a student shares in counseling remains confidential under the Counseling and Wellbeing Policy and is not used as evidence in a bullying investigation, unless it indicates a risk of harm, in which case safeguarding procedures are followed.

Step 5: Monitor and review

The Grade Leader checks in with the student who experienced bullying and their parents within one week, and again after four weeks, to make sure the bullying has stopped and the student feels safe. Outcomes are recorded on MyConcern. The case is only closed when the student and their parents agree that the situation has been resolved.

Serious cases

In serious cases, the Head of School and a Designated Safeguarding Lead will be involved. Where bullying may constitute a criminal offense, including under Qatar's cybercrime law, the Principal will decide, with the DSL, whether a referral to the relevant authorities is required. Serious incidents are reported to ISP in line with the ISP Incident and Crisis Reporting Management Policy.

8. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can happen at any time of day, reach a large audience very quickly, and be difficult to escape. Where online bullying involving Hamilton students affects their safety, wellbeing or relationships in school, the school will offer support and take appropriate action within its remit. For incidents outside school hours or on personal devices, we will work with families where possible, while recognizing that parents, platform providers or relevant authorities may need to take further action. Any safeguarding concern will be addressed through the school's safeguarding procedures.

Students and parents are advised not to reply to or forward hurtful content. Where possible, they should block the person involved, retain evidence by recording dates, times and usernames, and report the concern to the school. Staff must never ask a student to send, forward or show them a nude or semi-nude image; any such concern is referred to a DSL immediately. Students in Secondary are not permitted to use or access their mobile phones during the school day, in line with the E-Safety Policy and Section 16 of the Behavior Policy. Mobile phones should either remain at home or, if brought to school, must be secured in the student's Yondr pouch for the duration of the school day.

9. Prevention: Creating a Safer School Culture

The school adopts a proactive and preventative approach to bullying, recognizing that early intervention is essential. All staff maintain an attitude of "it could happen here". Our key strategies include:

- creating a positive school culture that promotes kindness, inclusion, respect and acceptance, built on our core values;
- clear and consistently applied behavior expectations that align with the Behavior Policy;
- respectful, trusting relationships between students and staff, so that every student has an adult they can talk to;
- a zero-tolerance approach to abusive, offensive or discriminatory language, and a commitment to challenging discrimination, prejudice and racism in all forms, including microaggressions;

- teaching social, emotional and conflict-resolution skills, online safety and the difference between bullying and relational conflict through the wellbeing curriculum, assemblies and whole-school initiatives;
- a whole-school Anti-Bullying Week each year, and regular revisiting of the STOP messages;
- targeted small-group programs led by the Counseling and Wellbeing team, such as friendships, social skills and conflict resolution, for students who need additional support;
- student voice and peer support initiatives, including student leaders and buddy schemes for younger students;
- active staff supervision at break and lunch times, in corridors and on school transport;
- clear signposting of the Designated Safeguarding Team and Counseling team on posters throughout the school;
- annual student and parent surveys that ask about bullying and feeling safe; and
- open communication with families, including parent sessions on bullying and online safety.

Discriminatory bullying, including racist incidents and microaggressions, is taken seriously and addressed through a safeguarding lens. Parents of affected students are informed promptly, and incidents are recorded and managed in line with safeguarding and behavior procedures.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

Creating a bullying-free culture is a shared responsibility. All staff will continuously model respectful behavior, challenge inappropriate behavior immediately, and report and record concerns promptly.

Principal and Senior Leadership Team: ensure that this policy is implemented consistently across the school, that staff are trained, and that bullying data is reviewed and acted upon.

Teaching and Homeroom Staff: act as the primary point of contact for students and parents, address low-level incidents and relational conflict, and record and escalate bullying incidents on MyConcern in line with this policy.

Grade Leaders: lead investigations into bullying incidents, communicate with parents, agree on support and consequences, and monitor patterns, repeated incidents and ongoing concerns.

Counseling and Wellbeing Team: provide emotional support to students affected by bullying, deliver targeted individual or group interventions, and support students displaying bullying behavior in developing empathy, accountability, and more positive ways of relating to others.

Counselors act as advocates for the students they support and do not lead investigations or decide consequences.

Designated Safeguarding Team: manage cases that meet safeguarding thresholds or involve child-on-child abuse, ensure consistency, oversight and accountability in all bullying responses, and manage serious or persistent cases.

Students: treat others with kindness and respect, online and offline, refuse to join in with bullying, and Start Telling a trusted adult if they or someone else is being bullied.

Parents and guardians: support the school's values, talk with their children about kindness, empathy, and respectful online behavior, stay involved in their children's device use, raise any concerns with the school rather than approaching other families directly, and work in partnership with the school on the agreed plan so that matters can be addressed fairly and appropriately.

11. Staff Training

All staff receive training on recognizing and responding to bullying, including cyberbullying, discriminatory bullying and child-on-child abuse, as part of onboarding and annual safeguarding training. Grade Leaders and the Counseling team receive additional training in investigation, restorative practice and supporting students affected by bullying.

12. Monitoring, Review and Accountability

Bullying incidents are recorded on MyConcern and analyzed each term by the Designated Safeguarding Team and the Counseling team to identify patterns in frequency, severity, location, type and repeated involvement. Findings are reported to the Principal, included in the counselor's termly report to the Senior Leadership Team, and inform preventative work for the following term.

This policy will be reviewed annually by school leadership with input from staff, students and parents. Progress will be measured through reductions in repeated incidents, student and parent survey responses on feeling safe, and improved student wellbeing.

Appendix A: Bullying Incident Record

Use this record to support the assessment and follow-up of a bullying report. The initial concern must always be logged on MyConcern; upload the completed record to the same MyConcern entry.

Date reported		**Reported by**	
Student(s) experiencing bullying		**Student(s) displaying behavior**	
Witnesses		**Staff leading the response**	
Where it happened		**How often / since when**	

Type of bullying (tick all that apply): ☐ Verbal ☐ Physical ☐ Social / relational ☐ Cyberbullying ☐ Prejudice-based or discriminatory

Summary of the concern *In the student's own words where possible.*
Information gathered *Accounts from each student and witness; evidence such as screenshots described, not copied.*

Does it meet the STOP definition?	☐ Bullying ☐ Relational conflict ☐ Single incident	**DSL informed?**	☐ No ☐ Yes – DSL name and date:
Parents informed (date, by whom)			

Support for the student experiencing bullying *Check-in adult, counseling referral (parental consent for weekly sessions), support measures agreed with the student.*
Response to the student displaying bullying behavior *Restorative work, consequences under the Behavior Policy, counseling or targeted support.*

Review 1 (1 week): date and outcome			
Review 2 (4 weeks): date and outcome			
Case closed (date), agreed with student and parents		**Signed (Grade Leader)**	

Appendix B: Student-Friendly Anti-Bullying Policy

What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone hurts you on purpose, again and again, and it is hard for you to make it stop. It can be words, actions, leaving you out, or things that happen online. At Hamilton we remember it as STOP: Several Times On Purpose.

Falling out with a friend now and then is not the same as bullying. But if it keeps happening on purpose, and you feel you cannot stop it, that is bullying, and we want to know.

What should I do?

- **S – Start Telling.** Bullying should never be a secret.
- **T – Tell an Adult.** Tell an adult from your Trusted 5, such as your teacher, your homeroom teacher, a counselor, the nurse, or any adult you trust in school. You can tell your parents too.
- **O – Others Can Help.** You do not have to deal with it alone. If you see someone being bullied, help them by telling an adult and being kind to them.
- **P – Power Back.** Speaking up gives the power back to you.

If it happens online

Do not reply and do not forward it. Block the person if you can. Remember the date, time and username, and show a trusted adult. Never send pictures of yourself to anyone online, even if they ask.

What will the school do?

We will listen to you, take what you say seriously, and take steps to keep you safe. We will help the student who is bullying to understand the hurt they caused and to stop. We will tell your parents so they can support you, and we will keep checking in with you until you feel things are better. You will not get into trouble for telling, and nobody is allowed to get back at you for speaking up.

Our promise

At Hamilton, everyone has the right to belong, to learn and to feel safe. We treat one another with respect, show emotional intelligence and communicate with care. We look out for each other.

Appendix C: Guidance for Parents and Guardians

Dear Parents and Guardians,

At Hamilton International School, every child has the right to feel safe, respected and happy at school. We take every concern about bullying seriously, and we know that working together with families is the most effective way to stop it.

At Hamilton, we describe bullying as STOP: Several Times On Purpose. It is behavior that is repeated, intended to hurt, and involves an imbalance of power. Occasional fallings-out between friends are a normal part of growing up and are not bullying, although we will still help children to resolve them. Bullying can be verbal, physical, social or online, and it can happen outside school hours on phones, games and social media.

Children do not always tell an adult that they are being bullied. You may notice that your child is reluctant to come to school, seems anxious or withdrawn, complains of headaches or stomach aches, has damaged or missing belongings, or becomes upset after using their phone. If you notice these changes, talk calmly with your child, listen without judgment, and reassure them that telling was the right thing to do.

If you are worried, please contact your child's class or homeroom teacher, Grade Leader, a school counselor, or a member of the Designated Safeguarding Team as soon as possible. Please share any dates, details, or screenshots you have with the relevant team. We kindly ask that you do not contact the other child or their family directly, or post about the situation on social media or parent groups, as this can make things harder for the children involved.

Once you have reported a concern, we will listen to your child and to the other students involved, decide on the right course of action, and keep you informed. We will agree support for your child, address the behavior of any student responsible in line with our Behavior Policy, and check in with you and your child until the situation has been resolved. For privacy reasons, we are not able to share details of the consequences given to other students.

If your child has been involved in bullying, we will contact you and ask for your support, as our aim is to help every child understand the impact of their behavior and make better choices. At home, you can help by talking regularly with your child about kindness and friendships, knowing which apps and games they use, agreeing on family rules for screen time, and encouraging them to tell an adult if anything worries them online.

Thank you for working in partnership with us to keep every child at Hamilton safe.

Warm regards,
The Grade Leaders, Counseling and Safeguarding Teams

HAMILTON International School | iSP International Schools Partnership

Is it bullying?

Everyone at Hamilton has the right to be here, to learn and to be safe.

Someone is being unkind to **you** or to **someone else**

Bullying can be
words, actions, leaving someone out, or online.

Is it happening Several Times On Purpose?

No → **Maybe a falling-out.** Still upset? Talk to an adult anyway.

Yes

That is bullying. Remember **STOP**:

S
Start Telling
Bullying should never be a secret.

T
Tell an Adult
A teacher, counselor, the nurse or any adult you trust.

O
Others Can Help
See it happen? Be kind and tell an adult.

P
Power Back
Speaking up gives the power back to you.

Feeling unsafe, or thinking about hurting yourself? **Don't wait. Tell an adult right now.**

Who can I tell?
Your teacher, homeroom teacher, a counselor, the nurse, your parents, or any adult you trust.

If it happens online
Don't reply or forward it. Block them. Note the date, time and username. Show a trusted adult.

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When bullying is reported

What happens next, for students, parents and staff.

1 Make safe and listen

The adult stops it, reassures the student and records it on MyConcern the same day.

Anyone can report: students, parents and staff.

2 Find out

The Year Group Leader talks with everyone involved and decides: bullying, a falling-out, or a one-off incident.

if needed →

Risk of harm? A Designated Safeguarding Lead acts immediately.

3 Inform parents

Parents of all students involved are contacted, normally the same day.

4 Support and act

Support for the student who was bullied. Help and fair consequences for the student responsible.

No student is ever made to meet the student who bullied them.

5 Check in

Follow-up after one week and four weeks. Closed only when the student and parents agree it has stopped.

Counselors support students on both sides.

Reporting is always the right thing to do.
Getting back at anyone who reports is a serious behavior incident.