



Sterling
International Academy,
Abuja

ANTI-BULLYING AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

May, 2024





1. Introduction

Established in 2015, Sterling International Academy is an academic institution whose mission is to cultivate a vibrant learning environment in order to produce children that are imaginative, inspiring, academically and morally sound. The school is an international community, both multicultural and diverse, and it values and celebrates all differences and expects that difference will be respected and embraced.

This policy sets out the school's commitment to create a learning environment free from hostility in which staff and stars are valued for their contribution and can develop to their full potential. The school expects everyone to relate to each other professionally and be treated with respect in a manner which recognizes the stakeholders' right to dignity at school. Any behaviour that undermines this is unacceptable.

2. Policy Statement

Bullying and harassment has a detrimental effect on Sterling and its stakeholders. It can create an unsafe learning environment, resulting in stars absenteeism, lack of interest in school activities and deterioration of academic performance. Stars who are bullied and harassed can become distressed, anxious, withdrawn and can lose self-esteem and self-confidence. For these reasons, bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.

We expect all staff and stars to treat each other with respect, empathy and compassion and our aim is to create a conducive learning environment which is free from any form of discrimination, bullying and harassment.

This policy shall form part of the staff contract of employment.

3. Scope

Sterling International Academy recognizes that bullying may involve comments and behaviours that offend some people and not others. The school also accepts that individuals may react differently to certain comments and behaviour. That is why a minimum standard of behaviour is required of both staff and stars. This standard aims to be respectful of all parties. Bullying can take place through a number of different methods of communication, hence this Policy applies to all methods of communication through which bullying can take place.

This policy applies to all employees (academic, non-academic, full time, part time or contract) and stars and moderates their behaviours within the school premises and operation hours.

4. What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone repeatedly says or does hurtful things to another person on purpose. It can happen in many different ways, like calling someone mean names, making fun of them, hitting



or pushing them, spreading rumors about them, or leaving them out of games or activities. Bullying makes the person being bullied feel sad, scared, or alone, and it's not okay. Everyone deserves to feel safe and happy, and bullying hurts everyone involved.

Example of bullying include but not limited to the following:

- **Physical bullying:** Pushing, hitting, kicking, or physically hurting others on purpose.
- **Verbal bullying:** Calling names, teasing, or saying mean things to others.
- **Exclusion:** Leaving classmates out of games, activities, or social groups.
- **Intimidation:** Making scary faces, threatening gestures, or using scary words to frighten others.
- **Harassment:** Continuously bothering, teasing, or annoying someone in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- **Discrimination:** Treating classmates unfairly because of differences like race, gender, or abilities.
- **Teasing:** Making fun of someone's appearance, clothing, or personal traits in a hurtful way.
- **Taking belongings:** Stealing or damaging someone's belongings, such as books, toys, or school supplies.
- **Spreading rumors:** Saying untrue things about others to make them look bad or cause trouble for them.



These behaviors are prohibited whether done by staff or stars, because they can hurt others' feelings, make them feel sad or scared, and create a bad atmosphere at school. However, legitimate and reasonable criticism of a star's performance or behaviour by a staff, does not amount to bullying.

5. What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted conduct (sexual or otherwise) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. In many countries it is unlawful to harass a person because of their age, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief.

Harassment is normally characterized by more than one incident of unacceptable behaviour, particularly if it reoccurs once it has been made clear by the victim that he or she considers it offensive. However, a single incident may constitute harassment if it is sufficiently serious. Harassment on any grounds will not be tolerated.

Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- unwanted physical conduct including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour;
- unwanted jokes, banter, mocking, mimicking or belittling a person.



6. Reporting and Response Procedures

- **Initial Reporting:** Any instances of bullying should be reported to the respective class teacher of the star involved. This report can be made by the affected star or any staff member who witnessed the incident.
- **Assessment by Class Teacher:** The class teacher is responsible for assessing the severity of the reported case. If it is determined to be the first occurrence and not severe, the class teacher will proceed to implement appropriate consequences for the star(s) found responsible for the bullying behavior. These consequences should be fair, consistent, and aimed at addressing the behavior and preventing future incidents.
- **Documentation:** The class teacher must document the reported incident for future reference and record-keeping purposes.
- **Escalation:** If the reported bullying behavior is deemed to be repetitive or severe, the class teacher will escalate the case to the Head of School or Head of Nursery, as the case may be. The Head of School will then take appropriate action, which may include further investigation, counseling for the involved star(s), and collaboration with parents/guardians to address the issue effectively.

By following this reporting procedure, we aim to ensure the safety and well-being of all stars and create a positive and supportive learning environment free from bullying behavior.

7. Duty of Care

All staff members at Sterling International Academy are entrusted with the responsibility of providing a duty of care to our stars. This duty extends to promptly reporting and treating with the utmost seriousness any cases of bullying that they may witness. In the event that an incident of bullying is confirmed during an investigation, and it is found that a staff member witnessed the act but failed to take appropriate action, disciplinary measures will be taken against that staff member.

8. Breaches of this policy

Bullying and harassment are not tolerated at Sterling International Academy, staff and stars are required to treat each other with dignity and respect. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. Serious cases of bullying or harassment may amount to gross misconduct resulting in suspension, expulsion or dismissal of the perpetrators (be it a staff or star). In a case where the victim suffers physical injury or destruction of properties, the perpetrator shall bear the burden of the medical bills or the property replacement cost.

Any Staff or star who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimization as a result of making a complaint.

9. Monitoring

Where harassment or bullying has been found to have occurred and the perpetrator remains in the school environment, regular checks will be made to ensure that harassment has stopped and that there has been no victimization or retaliation against the victim.



10. What is Victimisation?

Victimisation means treating any staff or star badly for making a complaint or helping someone else to make a claim by giving evidence or information. Any form of retaliatory treatment is unacceptable.

11. Malicious Complaints

Where a complaint is blatantly untrue and has been brought out of malice, or for some other unacceptable motive, the complainant will be subject to the school's disciplinary procedures, as will any witnesses who have deliberately misled the school during its investigations. Any repeat complaints which have already been responded to will not be accepted.

12. Implementation and Review

This policy will be shared with all stakeholders as part of the induction process when joining the school. Awareness programs will be conducted for the stars and staff to become aware of the prohibition of such practices and their respective roles in curbing such harmful practice.