DELEDDA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

OUR SCHOOL MISSION

"Deledda International School provides an international education that emphasizes academic excellence within a caring community for students. The School promotes the appreciation of the diversity of people and cultures and provides an environment conducive for learning and teaching □...□" https://genoaschool.eu/mission-aims/

Our school mission is inspired by the core values of the IB learner profile, "which describes a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that go beyond academic success" and "imply a commitment to help all members of the school community learn to respect themselves, others and the world around them". https://www.ibo.org/benefits/learner-profile/

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying can be defined as a type of aggressive behavior characterized by the following traits:

a) Hostile intent
b) Repetitiveness and persistence
c) Imbalance of power (Fonzi, 1999; Menesini et al., 2017)

For a behavior to be identified as bullying all the aforementioned criteria need to be observed. It is therefore not to be confused with occasional acts of mockery or rage. Bullying follows, on the contrary, a repeated template – a stereotyped process where the actors involved have specific preassigned roles. Bearing in mind that for a behavior to be referred to as bullying it needs to be repetitive, hostile and have imbalance of power, examples of behaviors that may develop into bullying acts may include: mockery related to physical appearance, defamation, social exclusion / isolation, physical aggression.

Different forms of bullying can take place: physical, verbal or indirect. During the past few years, with the advancement of technologies and the rise and spread of social media, a new kind of bullying, cyberbullying, has developed.

According to the Italian Law (Legge 29 Maggio 2017, n. 71), cyberbullying refers to any form of pressure, aggression, harassment, blackmail, insult, denigration, defamation, identity

theft, altercation, hostile takeover, manipulation, or misuse of data enacted against minors using electronic means, including the online dissemination of content regarding one or more members of the minor's family, and whose primary intent is isolating a minor or a group of minors executing an act of severe abuse, a damaging attack, or humiliating mockery.

Regardless of the modalities of the acts themselves, bullying acts are phenomena of a social nature (Gini & Pozzoli, 2011), which are representative of a complex developmental dysfunction of both the bully and the bullied. They therefore portray profound psycho-social distress, which certainly needs to be addressed when dealing with the issue (Fonzi, 1999).

The purpose of the present document is to indicate the actions to be taken by the school to recognize, prevent and contrast the phenomenon.

According to the literature, both Italian and international, involving the school, the students and the families is the best approach to adopt to help reduce the frequency of incidents. Indeed, the phenomenon is multidimensional, and it does not only implicate students and their peers, but also the school's culture, the quality of the relationships between families and the school itself and the whole social system.

As a school, we support an active communication with the families, a constructive exchange with the students and their parents and an approach that takes all possible variables into account.

We believe that primary (secondary, when bullying acts have occurred) and consistent prevention is key.

For this reason, an anti-bullying committee is established every year; its members include one teacher for each of the three programs offered in the school (Primary School, MYP, DP) and the school counselor. The committee, together with the faculty and the coordinators, is to monitor, prevent, and intervene.

Prevention

The committee, with the support of the faculty, has the following functions:

- Organizing informational and formative workshops and meetings

- Promoting a constant exchange between teachers, head of school and school counselor
- Indicating potential formative activities and materials to be integrated in the educational programs
- Fostering communication and reflection in the students during lessons

For students, specifically, the preventative acts aim to:

- Encourage healthy communication between students and adults, as well as among the students themselves
- Engage in constructive exchanges with the families
- Promote a conscious use of the internet
- Allow the students to develop emotional intelligence, affective expression and empathy
- Encourage the students to be upstanders and not bystanders, demonstrating principled and caring attributes

Conduct

The procedure undertaken by the school bodies where bullying acts are discovered or suspected is characterized by three main objectives: understand, act, reflect.

1. **Understand** – To deal with bullying episodes as effectively as possible, promoting the cooperation between the school and the families is essential. Although teachers consistently and attentively observe the students' behavior, it is nonetheless crucial that both students and families that are aware of a potentially risky situation immediately inform the school, contacting the faculty, the coordinators and the director. When a bullying episode is reported to the school the governing bodies will attempt to clarify and shed light on the course of events with the involved students. Since bullying is a very complex phenomenon, it can be difficult to detect. A careful analysis of potentially risky behaviors is therefore required to distinguish sporadic acts from actual bullying occurrences. Such analysis is also essential to avoid rash and ultimately ineffective interventions.

2. **Act** – Once the course of events has been determined, the school considers the possible means to support all students and families involved. Indeed, the school does not only wish to act upon the negative behavior, but also help the affected students and families work through the events. Different experts and/or authorities (postal police, doctors, healthcare personnel, psychologists, social workers) could be employed to work alongside and cooperate with the school. The latter can adopt a wide range of possible disciplinary measures deemed appropriate towards the students who have committed acts of bullying. Such measures may consist of the suspension or the expulsion of the student involved.

   It is worth specifying that episodes of cyberbullying remain under the responsibility of the minor's family. Such incidents are to be reported by the families themselves, as the school cannot have access to the minors' devices. The latter offers support, were the families to seek it, but is not required to, although it may, adopt any type of disciplinary action for the matter.

   Moreover, although the school actively attempts to prevent bullying episodes during school hours and instructs the community regarding the issue to keep unfortunate events from occurring, it cannot be held responsible for such acts were they to occur when students are not under school personnel supervision.

   All disciplinary measures undertaken by the school as consequence of bullying are to be approved in a school board meeting by a majority vote.

3. **Reflect** – The school encourages the students involved to reflect on the events. Indeed, depending on the circumstances, the head of school, the faculty or the designated experts can work to propose an individualized reflective program related to the incident to both the students and their families.

All disciplinary actions undertaken are regulated by the school Handbook, which can be found on the school website, and is linked below.

http://genoaschool.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/HANDBOOK_DIS_2019_Genova.pdf

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