

Anti-Bullying Policy

The Ras Al Khaimah American Academy (RAK AA) believes that a safe and secure educational environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve. It is the school's highest priority to provide an environment that is safe, secure and conducive to learning. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of students, administrators, parents, faculty, staff, visitors, and volunteers.

BULLYING IS PROHIBITED

Bullying of a student, whether by other students, staff, visitors, parents, guests, contractors, or volunteers, is prohibited. All students are protected under this policy, and bullying is prohibited without regard to its subject matter or motivation.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

"Bullying" means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds which substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:

- a. a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property;
- b. has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
- c. creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

The impact of bullying may be clearly manifested by poor grades, solitude or moodiness at home, or nervous reactions such as loss of appetite or insomnia.

Specific examples of bullying are as follows:

- Physical - hitting, punching, pushing, scratching, biting, spitting, tripping
- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Racial - racial taunts, name calling, gestures, graffiti
- Religious - religious taunts, name calling

- Verbal - name calling, teasing, putdowns, sarcasm, ethnic or religious insults; physical, social or academic disability insults
- Textual - passing notes, writing on desks or in Student Planners/Diaries. Electronic forms - SMS, email, Facebook/Twitter, chat rooms, Internet sites
- Social - ignoring, excluding, mimicking, spreading rumors, defaming, dirty looks, intimidation, extortion, stealing, hiding or breaking possessions.

Bullying is prohibited at school. **“At school”** is defined as in a classroom, elsewhere on school premises, at school-sponsored activities or events, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, or using a telecommunications access device or a telecommunications service provider if the telecommunications access device or telecommunications service provider is owned by or under the control of the Ras Al Khaimah American Academy access device” and “telecommunications service provider”.

RAK AA strictly enforces all state legislated anti-bullying regulations as required by law.

Bullying that does not occur “at school,” as defined above, including bullying that occurs over the internet (cyber bullying), that causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with this policy and applicable law.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

This policy as well as the other related policies such as Cyber Safety policy, Discipline Policy and Student Behavior Policy are created and will be strictly implemented with the following aims:

- To enhance awareness among all students, parents and staff on the above definition of bullying and the distressing effect it has on its victims.
- To create a safe and secure climate in which students who are bullied, or think another student is being bullied, can speak freely to an appropriate staff member with the full knowledge that they will be listened to and receive prompt, appropriate and sensitive response.
- To ensure that all students, parents and staff are fully aware of the referral procedures for reporting bullying incidents and the strategies adopted for supporting those involved in these incidents.
- To uphold a school community where bullying is recognized as unacceptable and where all students feel valued, secure and happy.

REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING REPORTS OF BULLYING

Every student is encouraged to report any act of bullying to a staff member, including a teacher, a counselor, the School Principal, or other staff member. Staff members shall report any incidents or acts of bullying to the School Principal.

Retaliation or false accusation against a target of bullying, a witness, or another person with reliable information about an act of bullying is prohibited. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as suspected bullying behavior. Making intentionally false accusations about bullying is prohibited. Retaliation and making intentionally false accusations about bullying may result in disciplinary action.

All reports of a violation of this policy or a related complaint shall be promptly investigated within the time period.

If the investigation results in a finding that an instance of bullying has occurred, it shall result in prompt and appropriate disciplinary action, which may include (detention of the students, discharge for teachers or staff, and exclusion of entry in the school premises for parents, visitors, volunteers, and contractors) depending on the severity of the bullying case.

Where the investigation results in a finding that bullying has occurred, notification will be provided to the parent or legal guardian of a victim of bullying and the parent or legal guardian of a perpetrator of the bullying.

The RAK AA School shall document any prohibited incident that is reported and shall document all verified incidents of bullying and the resulting consequences, including discipline and referrals.

All acts of bullying shall be reported verbally to the school principal on the same day when the school employee or contracted service provider witnessed or received reliable information regarding any such incident. The principal shall inform the parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident, and may discuss, as appropriate, the availability of counseling and other intervention services.

All acts of bullying shall be reported in writing to the school principal within two school days of when the school employee or contracted service provider witnessed or received reliable information that a student had been subject to harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

The School Principal is the school official responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

RAK AA School will explain the anti-Bullying policy and its ramifications to all students enrolled at the school at the beginning of the term.

RAK AA School will provide annual training on preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying to administrators, teachers and support staff who have significant contact with students.

RAK AA School will provide annual educational programming for students and parents on preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying and cyber bullying if any.

CONFIDENTIALITY

RAK AA School will comply with all applicable laws regarding confidentiality of personally identifiable information from education records.

NOTIFICATION

This policy will be annually circulated to parents and students and will be posted on the RAK AA School website. The School Principal develops administrative guidelines to strictly implement this policy.

ADDENDUM: DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP SKILLS IN DISTANCE LEARNING

To ensure that cyberbullying is prevented while distance learning is taking place in this challenging time (Covid 19 pandemic situation), RAK AA included in the curriculum the teaching of DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP SKILLS to our middle and high school students. The Digital Citizenship skills lesson aims to develop among students on how to show appropriate, respectful and responsible behavior when using technology. We believe that when students learn positive online behavior, their online learning will be productive in many ways. Each class in the middle and high school have one lesson per week conducted by the Social Worker wherein digital skills, safety and etiquette are emphasized during the lesson.

For this Academic Year 2020-21, Digital Citizenship lessons have been extended to all grades across the school and will be taught by the homeroom teachers from KG to G12 and Esafety Education will be conducted by the IT Department.

Positive online behavior will be continuously reinforced by the school by choosing students who have shown exemplary behavior and awarding them certificates. The selection will be made by their homeroom teachers as one of the criteria is the

consistency of the good behavior in all subjects while Distance/ Blended Learning is taking place.

Related Links:

MOE Discipline Policy

<https://rakaa.sch.ae/files/MOE%20discipline%20policy.pdf>

RAKAA Discipline Policy

<https://rakaa.sch.ae/files/DISCIPLINE%20POLICY.pdf>

RAKAA Student Behavior Policy

https://rakaa.sch.ae/files/Student%20Behavior%20Policy_24-06_2018.pdf

Wadeema's Law:

https://www.khda.gov.ae/CMS/WebParts/TextEditor/Documents/Children_Law_English.pdf

RAKAA Child Protection Policy

<https://rakaa.sch.ae/files/RAKAAG%20Child%20Protection%20Policy.pdf>

RAKAA Cyber Safety Policy

https://rakaa.sch.ae/files/RAKAAG_Cyber%20safety%20Policy_2020.pdf

RAKAA ICT Blog for cyber safety:

<https://RAKAAict.wordpress.com/blogging/cyber-safety/>

Guide for Parents for Anti-Bullying

<https://u.ae/-/media/Information-and-services/Justice-safety-and-the-law/Guide-for-parents-on-anti-bullying.ashx?la=en>

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