Anti-Bullying Policy

A. OBJECTIVE

This institution is committed to providing a safe, caring and positive environment that maximizes the learning experience and opportunities for all students. Every member of this school community is expected to take personal responsibility for their own emotional and physical safety and that of others. Bullying, harassment or intimidation of any student is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

This protocol establishes clear practices and procedures for handling both observed and reported incidents of bullying. This protocol is an update of a previous one from ITJ Palomar and has been developed in alignment with ISP's Safeguarding Policies, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and SEP legislation (https://escuelalibredeviolencia.sep.gob.mx/acosoescolarink) to ensure a consistent and effective approach across the whole school.

B. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is any intentional, targeted and repeated behavior that occurs within a context of a power imbalance —whether physical, social, economic or age-related. It generally occurs away from adult supervision and is intended to subdue, exploit or harm another student. Bullying can occur at any age and in any setting, whether at home, at school, or through online platforms and technologies (cyberbullying).

Bullying can manifest in various forms:

1. **Verbal abuse:** the use of words to hurt, humiliate or intimidate someone, such as insults, mockery, blackmail, or belittling based on personal characteristics.
2. **Physical abuse:** the use of force to hurt, threaten or control another person. Includes actions such as hitting, pushing, unwanted contact, stalking, sexual assault, or damaging personal belongings.
3. **Emotional abuse:** behaviors intended to undermine confidence, generate fear, or socially isolate the victim. Examples: threats or intimidation through aggressive gestures, deliberate social exclusion, spreading rumors, or damaging someone's reputation.

4. **Cyberbullying:** the use of digital platforms to intimidate, threaten or harm others. Examples: sending abusive messages, sharing malicious content, identity impersonation, exclusion from online games or groups, creating and spreading offensive images or videos, harassment on social media, chats or video games, creating hate sites or fake accounts, among others.

Bullying may also intersect with discrimination, particularly when motivated by a student's disability, race, religion or beliefs, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

According to ITJ, the key elements of bullying include a coercive power imbalance, severity and repetition, and the capacity to generate in the victim a reasonable fear of significant harm to their physical or mental well-being, property, or academic performance. It is important that staff focus on behaviors rather than labeling students, since the roles of victim, aggressor, or bystander are dynamic and can change over time.

C. SCOPE AND PROCEDURES

The school seeks to foster a strong anti-bullying culture across all areas of school life. Preventive measures are implemented in accordance with the SEP framework.

1. Peaceful conflict resolution

The school establishes and enforces a clear anti-bullying policy, with concrete examples so that the whole community understands what behaviors constitute bullying. Rules and expectations are set for students, staff and community members, promoting a safe and consistent environment. Teachers supervise at key moments (recess, arrival and dismissal) to identify and intervene in a timely manner. Staff guide students in managing incidents, fostering responsibility and awareness of consequences. Students are encouraged to take personal responsibility and to participate in discussions and activities that promote harmonious resolution of conflicts.

2. Development of social-emotional skills

Learning opportunities are provided to develop prosocial skills (communication, cooperation, empathy) during homeroom sessions. Social-emotional learning programs such as Second Step are integrated into the curriculum. Peer mentoring schemes are established to strengthen respect and collaboration. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and their deputies are available to guide and support students. At the start of the year, each student chooses a trusted

adult (Go-To Person) with whom they can speak in case of concerns. Training programs are offered to parents to support their children's healthy social-emotional development.

3. Inclusive environment

A culture of welcome and care is promoted, gathering student feedback through safety surveys. Awareness campaigns and school activities are carried out to reinforce values of respect and inclusion. Students are encouraged to report bullying incidents without fear of retaliation. Incidents are investigated and addressed consistently, including during off-campus school outings.

4. Democratic school management

All reported incidents are logged, investigated and monitored to ensure transparency and accountability. Rules, policies and preventive measures are clearly communicated to the whole school community. Sanctions are applied fairly and consistently. Feedback is gathered from parents and guardians to improve preventive strategies. Shared responsibility for the school climate is fostered through joint campaigns and activities involving students, staff and families.

D. SCHOOL RESPONSE AND PRACTICES

All bullying incidents must be reported and investigated, even if the victim does not file a formal complaint. The reporting system covers the who, what, where, when, why and how of each situation. Reports can be made through the Go-To Person, email, message, phone, in person, or through parents/peers.

Staff response protocol: When staff intervene, they must act immediately to stop the behavior, focus on the behavior rather than the student, and ensure the safety of everyone involved. Peer mediation is not recommended in bullying cases due to the inherent power imbalance. Investigations are carried out immediately, with students interviewed separately to prevent further victimization.

Support for the victim focuses on safety, reassurance, and participation in counseling or peer support. For the alleged aggressor, staff guide students to reflect on their behavior through "first-person statements" and foster personal responsibility by reinforcing rules, expectations, and personal accountability. Consequences are applied in accordance with the Student Handbook.

All incidents are reported to the Section Head and to the DSL through safeguarding forms or the *My Concern* platform. Serious or repeated cases are referred to the leadership team, following safeguarding procedures and SEP protocols. Confidentiality is maintained, and the parents of both the victim and the alleged aggressor are informed immediately to ensure early intervention.

E. PROCEDURES FOLLOWING A BULLYING REPORT

If a bullying incident is reported, the following procedures will be adopted:

- The staff member to whom the incident was reported, or who first discovered the situation, will take control of the situation, reassuring and supporting the students involved. Students must be moved to a safe location if necessary.
- A member of the Section Leadership or Safeguarding team will be informed as soon as possible.
- Victims will be interviewed individually and asked to write an account of the events. They may receive help to do so. Leading questions should be avoided, and only concrete facts should be gathered.
- The alleged aggressor, as well as anyone else who was involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to immediately write an account of the events.
- The incident will be recorded and kept in the files of all students involved, in addition to being logged in the safeguarding records.
- The School Principal will be informed and will take part in the case if the bullying is serious or persistent in nature and requires a higher level of intervention.
- The victim will be interviewed separately from the alleged aggressor. It will be made clear to them why retaliation is inappropriate. They will be offered support to develop a self-care strategy and/or access to Human Development support.
- The alleged aggressor will be interviewed afterward, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear to them why their behavior was inappropriate and caused distress. They will be offered guidance to modify their behavior, along with the corresponding disciplinary sanctions.
- Parents/guardians of all parties must be informed and may be invited to the school to discuss the matter. Their support will be sought. A path forward will be agreed upon, including disciplinary sanctions and possibly psychotherapeutic support.
- In very serious cases, and following the Principal's intervention, it may be necessary to submit a report to the relevant authorities, such as the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP), and to follow its own protocol and instructions.

F. REMEDIATION AND CONSEQUENCES

Remediation strategies may include behavior contracts, meetings with parents/family to establish agreements, consultations with psychologists to assess mental health, and training in social skills (empathy, anger management, problem-solving), apologies, restitution, and reflective classroom discussions.

Consequences vary according to severity and recurrence, ranging from verbal or written warnings, temporary removal from class, loss of privileges, behavior reports, and parent notification, up to suspension or more serious disciplinary action.

Decisions take into account the student's age and maturity, the nature and frequency of the behaviors, the context and relationships involved, past patterns, the school culture, and the support systems available.

G. PARENT, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Families are partners in reinforcing expectations and consequences. This may include signing family agreements, attending counseling or educational workshops, and actively participating in the promotion of social-emotional learning. Mandatory workshops for parents provide guidance on preventing and addressing bullying and other topics.

H. ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES

The school actively assesses conditions in classrooms and school spaces to prevent bullying, reviews policies annually, communicates behavioral expectations, increases supervision, provides professional training to staff, and fosters collaboration between parents and teachers to maintain a safe and inclusive environment.

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