



Planète Montessori
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

DATE	REVIEWED BY/ROLE	NEXT REVIEW DATE
Last updated: January 2024	DSL	July 2024

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Statement on Safeguarding

Planete Montessori International School is committed to providing a safe environment for all its members, following our belief that all children have the right to be safe in our society and community. To support this, we are committed to act in the best interest of every child and adult in our care by providing an environment of inclusion, security and safety. Planete Montessori International School follows all national regulations and laws subscribing this, and we encourage everyone in our community to talk to a person of trust when they have a worry or concern. We are alert to signs of bullying and have procedures in place to deal effectively with these concerns for the wellbeing of our children and to make sure they are protected and supported. Through our commitment to equality and our aim to make everyone who is a part of and is connected to our school community feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth, we do not discriminate based on any protected characteristics and will not allow others, including pupils, to do so, be this age, disability, marriage, pregnancy, race, religion or believe or sex.

We see bullying in any form as unacceptable and as having an often-long-lasting effect on children, young people and their families, which we aim to prevent.

This document entails these efforts and the regulations in place in our school, and thus this policy applies to all school staff and any community members working with children in and around our school. We believe this policy to be a working document fit for purpose, which ensures consistency and quality across the school.

In this policy, we define bullying by following the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) guidelines, which identifies bullying as having three important components:

- Repeated aggressive behaviour that involves unwanted, negative actions
- Involves a pattern of behaviour repeated over time
- An imbalance of power or strength, whether real or perceived. These could be being physically stronger, or could also involve things such as being more popular and belonging to the majority group, making the victim feel they are unable to defend themselves.

Thus, when tackling incidents in our school and trying to define bullying behaviour, we look out for the following:

- An intention to harm; it being deliberate
- A harmful outcome, be this physically or emotionally
- Persistency and repeated incidents
- Direct or indirect incidents, e.g. physically hitting someone or spreading rumours
- Unequal power between the perpetrator and the victim

We recognise that our school plays a significant part in the prevention of bullying with our pupils, be this through effective lines of communication, providing trusted adults, supporting pupils who are struggling or by generally providing an ethos of protection.

As such, we believe this policy:

- has been reviewed thoroughly by the Designated Safeguarding Lead to make sure it stands up to scrutiny
- flows and is easy to follow
- is an essential part of our school
- supports staff in managing certain situations
- allows for a consistent application of values and principles throughout our school
- provides guidance, accountability and clarity on how the school operates

In line with this, we ensure that:

- all parties in the school understand and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities
- all staff members new to our school are made aware of our policies, procedures, contact information of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and take the required trainings to be up to date on current anti bullying and child protection standards to ensure the safety of everyone in the school
- all members of staff know how to respond to disclosures of bullying, as well as the procedure to be followed when such disclosure takes place
- all parents/carers are made aware of the school's responsibilities regarding bullying by publishing of (extracts of) our policies on our school website - in the event of a member of staff having a bullying concern, they will immediately inform the DSL through email and accurately record the events.

The Anti-Bullying Policy is written in conjunction with, and works alongside, the following policies, to cover all aspects of safety, safeguarding and child protection:

- Educational Visits Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Visitor Policy

This policy, and all other policies in place at Planete Montessori International School, are in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the national legislation of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Name
Head of School (HoS)	Oussama Chraibi
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Rens van Lieshout

Role of School Personnel

School personnel will:

- recognise that preventing bullying, and instead promoting a safe and comfortable environment and acting in the best interests of the child, is everyone's responsibility, and that this is their main responsibility
- be alert at all times to the signs of bullying
- be made aware of and comply with this policy and all other safeguarding policies and procedures in the school
- be made aware of all safeguarding systems within the school, as well as their roles and responsibilities
- make sure their pupils know what to do if they are bullied
- use preventative strategies such as circle time to discuss safety and preventing harm
- report and investigate all incidences of bullying and discrimination taking place in their presence
- encourage pupils to report any incidents of bullying to any member of the school personnel
- support any pupil who has been bullied
- undertake anti-bullying training at induction, as well as annual refresher trainings, that involve identifying signs of bullying
- report to the designated safeguarding lead any concerns they have regarding a child
- report to the Senior Leadership Team any concerns they may have about any aspect of the school community, including poor or unsafe practices and procedures
- ensure that no promise of confidentiality is made to any child when it involves harm, but to always act in the best interests of a child

Role of Pupils

Pupils must:

- feel safe and protected
- treat others, their work and their equipment with respect - talk to others without shouting and while using language which is neither abusive nor offensive
- be aware of and comply with this policy
- know how to assess risks to themselves and keep themselves safe
- know how to raise a concern or complaint, and know and recognise a trusted adult they could do so with
- follow the following instructions if they are bullied:
 - > get away from the situation as quickly as possible

- > report they are being bullied, sharing to one of the school personnel:
 - > what happened to them
 - > how they feel
 - > who bullied them
 - > where the incident happened
 - > when it happened
 - > if they have been bullied before (by the perpetrator or by someone else)
 - > tell their parent(s)/carer(s) or another family member
- report it when they see someone else being bullied
- feel supported and protected when they raise or report a concern
- be kept informed of any actions that have been taken when they have raised a complaint
- be made aware of the basic anti-bullying procedures in school

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are:

- asked to work hard with the school to establish excellent home-school relationships
- made aware of and support this policy
- aware that we have a responsibility for the welfare of all our pupils
- aware that they will be kept up to date with all our actions involving their child(ren), including that we have dealt with incidents, and how we have dealt with this
- involved in discussions on bullying in regards to their child(ren)
- invited to attend a series of workshops to:
 - > be made aware that any form of bullying will not be tolerated and that perpetrators will be held accountable
 - > ensure that parents/carers know what measures are being taken to prevent bullying
 - > know how incidents are monitored, responded to, evaluated and recorded
 - > encourage positive messages about good behaviour and respect for others at home
- report to the school any concerns they have of their child(ren) being bullied

Bullying

We believe every child or young person has the right to be themselves and thrive at school. Therefore, through our zero-tolerance policy, under no circumstances will we tolerate any form of bullying, with all incidents of bullying dealt with promptly and effectively and with appropriate action taken to protect any victim(s) involved. We have a duty of care to protect pupils from bullying, in line with our responsibility to provide a safe and secure, kind and collaborative environment for all our children to help protect them from any deliberate harm that may be caused to them, be this physically or emotionally. We work hard to eliminate all forms of bullying and to keep records of all incidents, ensuring that we can follow-up on incidents and prevent further harm from happening.

Bullying can take many forms, including cyberbullying (occurring online), and is often motivated by (perceived) differences between children, which can include but is not limited to race, religion, gender, pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or those with disabilities, or other protected and non-protected characteristics. Bullying can be physical (such as pushing, hitting, kicking, pinching, etc.), verbal (such as name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours etc.) and emotional (such as excluding someone, manipulating, ridiculing, intimidating etc.). It can also be a mix of different behaviours.

We also recognise that teasing and ‘banter’ might be common amongst friendship groups, but are not perceived the same way for everyone. Thus, though it usually does not involve an intention or desire to cause harm, it is important to be aware of, and prevent it, when it causes anyone harm, be this without intent or on purpose.

Additionally, we understand that abuse can also take place anywhere. This includes by family members at home (known as domestic abuse), at school, when playing outdoors, during extracurricular activities or while on educational visits, at a friend’s place, online, etc. It is important to recognise that bullying is often a group behaviour that happens within a social context. We do not recognise ‘bystander apathy’ as a valid excuse for not acting, and those being aware of bullying behaviour while not acting upon it by reporting it will be met with appropriate consequences.

If left unaddressed, it can have far reaching effects on those individuals, leading all the way into adulthood. We are aware it can cause anxiety, depression, hyperactivity and behavioural problems, but also realise that recent research has shown that, with proper support, the anxiety and depression caused can decrease over time, allowing children to recover in the medium term.

To help prevent this from happening, the school will:

- establish a culture of safeguarding, which is understood and underlined by all staff and throughout our school policies
- ensure that children know there are people of trust in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or are experiencing difficulty, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the school counsellor
- provide opportunities to equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and know who they should turn to for help
- engage with parents/carers whenever relevant incidents occur involving their child(ren), as it is very important to us to work with parents/carers and to keep them well-informed at all stages.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is any form of bullying behaviour via electronic means. It is also known as online bullying or online abuse, and may take place on phones, tablets, computers and laptops via instant messaging, email, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok, X and Facebook, among others, to harass, threaten or intimidate someone. This can involve sending offensive messages, masquerading as someone else, trolling, using obscene language, targeting them anonymously, creating gossip online, mocking people, voting for the ugliest or dumbest person, etc. It being online, it can be experienced at any point, inside and outside the school.

Cyberbullying can also include grooming, which is the process of persuading or coercing someone to act or do something they were not planning or intending to do. It normally happens, like bullying, when there is an imbalance of power, and can involve a young person being contacted on- or offline with the intention of meeting and potentially harming the child or young person, or encouraging a child to send images or videos of themselves.

Consequences

When less than appropriate behaviour occurs, this is followed with consequences to try and steer the behaviour in the right direction and avoid future incidents from occurring. Where this is not the case, further measures are taken for follow-up incidents.

Though exceptions and tailored consequences are implemented for incidents of a graver nature, such as heavy bullying, physical abuse, sexual abuse and other cases, the normal flow-through of consequences (for one off incidents, bullying, neglect, physical abuse, etc.) are as followed:

- First offence: no recess for one day. Parents/carers are informed via ManageBac or via phone call.
- Second offence: removal from all school events, included but not limited to MMUN, educational visits and events inside the school. Parents/carers are informed and involved via a face-to-face meeting.
- Third offence: suspension for three days. Parent/carers are informed and involved via a face-to-face meeting.
- Fourth offence: expulsion from the school. Parents/carers are informed and involved via one, or multiple, face-to-face meetings.

Consequences taken are put in writing and sent to the DSL. This is done via filling in the 'Actions taken' section of the Incident Report Form, detailing said consequences.

Related Information

This policy is reviewed annually at a minimum by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and is adapted based on past year's experiences, as well as updates to safeguarding and child protection practices and measures.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, alongside all other policies in place at Planete Montessori International School.

The next review date for this policy is July 2024.

Related policies:

- Educational Visits Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Visitor Policy