



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Information for Parents and Students

Introduction: Our Policy

As part of our commitment to the Kesser Torah College (KTC) values of Derech Eretz and Nurturing, KTC strives to create and maintain an environment where students, staff and others who form part of our community feel safe, secure, respected and supported as they learn, work and socialise. This means, amongst other things, creating a positive culture where bullying is not accepted.

Expectations and Responsibilities

KTC expects every member of the KTC community - that is, staff, students, parents and visitors - to work cooperatively to achieve these goals. This means that all members of the KTC community are expected to:

- Be aware of and up to date with KTC's position on bullying as set out in this document.
- By their own actions and statements, reinforce within the school community that bullying is unacceptable.
- Make every reasonable effort to prevent bullying behaviour
- Remain alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to report bullying of anyone to members of the Senior Management Team (SMT).

The remainder of this document explains what bullying is, how we work at KTC to achieve our policy goals, and how we expect parents to work with us.

Students in Years 7, 8, 9,10, 11 and 12 will receive an Assessment Schedule for each subject they are studying. It will show the type of task, the weighting and which term the task is to be attempted. At the beginning of each Term a schedule with a specific date for each task for that term will be published and given to the students by the Head of General Studies.

Students will be notified about the details of the task via a Task Notification. All Task Notifications are sent to the Head of General Studies for checking before distribution to students. Task Notifications are distributed at least two weeks before the due date.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is unreasonable and sustained behaviour that causes a person or people to feel frightened, shamed, humiliated, threatened, excluded or in pain. It is usually conduct that is repeated or that happens over an extended period, although sometimes a single act of particular nastiness or violence can be bullying. It is also usually intentional conduct.

Bullying can occur in many different forms, including through:

- *Physical acts* - unwelcome or deliberately aggressive physical contact or deliberate damage to property
- *Verbal conduct* - the sustained or repeated use of language to threaten, shame, hurt or humiliate including put-downs or teasing
- *Gestures* - the use of non-verbal signals to cause intimidation or fear
- *Exclusion* - deliberately leaving someone out on purpose in order to cause feelings of rejection and hurt (including taking friends away)
- *Extortion* - the use of threat or power to obtain favour or goods e.g. making an individual do things that he/she does not want to do

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- *Negative conduct based on race or religion* - such as antagonism or prejudice
- *Cyber-bullying* - including text messages, chat lines, social networking sites such Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok etc., repeated phone contact, email contact which harasses or causes distress
- *Sexual conduct* - unwelcome attention or contact of a sexual nature.
- *Bystander conduct* - any encouragement of bullying behaviour by those watching, including recording, laughing or commenting on the bullying. It includes not actively seeking to prevent bullying. In addition, bystanders who allow bullying to occur and do not report it, are guilty of supporting bullying.

Bullying can occur at school, or at school events such as excursions, and online.

- Bullying is *not*: Children not getting along or arguing
- Mutual conflict which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. (If the conflict is unresolved, it could turn into bullying).
- Isolated cases of social rejection
- Isolated cases of “being mean” to one another.

However, these behaviours, while not strictly “bullying”, are not consistent with KTC’s values, and KTC may act in response to these incidents, even if they are not strictly “bullying”.

It is also not bullying for teachers to take reasonable disciplinary action.

What are the possible signs that my child is being bullied?

Many children will not tell their parents or caregivers directly if they are being bullied. Watch for unexplained changes in behaviour and sudden anxiety or distress, and please talk to your child’s classroom teacher or Head of Primary (Primary); or Year Coordinator or the Head of Student Welfare (High School) if you have any concerns.

KTC’s Approach

KTC has a four-phase approach to bullying:

1. Primary Prevention

- Professional development for all staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Programs to raise community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and KTC’s programs and policies.
- Student programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Teachers clarify KTC’s stance on bullying to students at the start of each school year.

2. Early Intervention

- Programs at school that explain and reiterate to staff and students the importance of reporting bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Parents are strongly encouraged to contact KTC if they become aware of suspected bullying behaviour.

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- Emphasis on “awareness training” for bystanders, who may see or hear incidents of bullying occur.

3. Intervention

If bullying is suspected or alleged, KTC will usually intervene as set out below. KTC may at its discretion adjust this process to suit the particular circumstances.

- Once identified, the alleged offender, victim and witnesses will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be investigated and documented.
- Individuals identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations. Parents of the alleged “bully” will also be notified.
- Both alleged offenders and victims will be offered counselling and support.

In some cases, the offender will be given a consequence for his/her actions – in other cases, both the offender and the victim will participate in a ‘Restorative Action’ mediation.

- If student bullying persists, parents will be contacted and consequences consistent with KTC’s Discipline Policy will be implemented. In some cases, this could include KTC suspending a student or terminating a student’s enrolment.
- Parents who bully anyone else in the KTC community – including students, staff or other parents – would be in breach of their obligation to work cooperatively with KTC, and ultimately this may result in KTC terminating their children’s enrolment.
- KTC may seek support from School Liaison Police in certain cases.

4. Ongoing Support Post Violation

- Ongoing counselling and support will be offered to both victim and offender
- Class meetings reinforcing ‘Anti-bullying’ strategies will continue to be held
- Positive behaviour will be reinforced through school systems
- Ongoing monitoring of identified offenders will take place.

Parental Support

KTC recognises the vital role parents and guardians play in supporting its Anti-Bullying Policy. Parents are encouraged to:

- Know what bullying is and what it is not. Watch for signs that their children might have been bullied.
- Maintain an open communication between home and school and notify KTC of any incident or suspected incident of bullying that may have affected their child or others.
- Take what their children say about bullying seriously.
- Encourage and educate their children about telling a responsible person (e.g. parent, member of staff or responsible peers) if bullying occurs.

What should I do if I think my child is being bullied?

- Inform your child’s classroom teacher or Head of Primary (Primary); or Year Coordinator or Head of Student Welfare (High School).

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- Support and reassure your child that you will be involved as KTC works to improve the situation.
- Be willing to attend any meetings or interviews and work with KTC to ensure any measures implemented are effective and adequate.
- *You should not encourage your child to retaliate or hit back if he or she is being bullied. You should also not take action into your own hands or contact the parents of the alleged bully.*

What should I do if my child displays bullying behaviour?

You may also need to be prepared to accept that your child may be bullying someone else. Children and young people who bully others often have trouble in their relationships with others in later life. Work with KTC to help and support your child through the problem.

KTC aims to treat fairly all students accused of bullying.

If your child is accused of bullying, or you think your child has been bullying others, you should:

- Take the matter seriously: you should make it clear to your child that this kind of behaviour is not acceptable.
- Be involved in the process: be willing to attend any meetings or interviews and work with KTC to:
 - help discover the truth about the allegations; and
 - ensure any measures implemented are effective and adequate.

In some cases, it may be necessary to organise counselling for your child.

Any questions?

If you have any questions or concerns about bullying or how it is dealt with at KTC, please talk to your child's classroom teacher or the Head of Primary (Primary School); or Year Coordinator or Head of Student Welfare (High School).