



AIS-Salzburg Anti-Bullying and Anti-Cyberbullying Policy

Information for Parents and Guardians

Our commitment to students

AIS-Salzburg is a small international boarding and day school in which students study, live, travel, compete, and spend much of their daily lives together. Because most students are full boarders, difficulties between students can affect not only a classroom or friendship, but also a student's sense of safety and belonging within the residential community. Every student should feel known, respected, supported, and able to participate fully in school life. Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, retaliation, and deliberate exclusion are inconsistent with the mission and values of AIS-Salzburg and will not be tolerated.

Our small size is an important strength. Faculty, Resident-Care staff members, and administrators know students well, see them in different settings, and are often able to notice changes early. We aim to respond personally, promptly, and fairly whenever a concern is raised.

This parent and guardian overview explains:

- how AIS-Salzburg works to prevent bullying;
- what behavior may constitute bullying or cyberbullying;
- how concerns may be reported;
- how the school responds;
- what support may be provided; and
- how parents and guardians can work with us.

What we mean by bullying

Bullying is repeated or sustained behavior that intentionally or knowingly causes physical, emotional, social, or psychological harm and involves an actual or perceived imbalance of power.

That imbalance may arise from age, physical strength, popularity, social influence, language ability, access to private information, membership in a group, seniority, boarding status, or another circumstance that makes it difficult for the affected student to defend themselves or bring the behavior to an end.

Bullying may be direct or indirect and may be carried out by one student or a group.

Not every disagreement, friendship difficulty, argument, or unkind comment is bullying. Students living closely together will sometimes misunderstand, frustrate, or offend one another. Ordinary conflict generally involves students of relatively equal power who are both able to take part in resolving the matter.

A serious single incident may not meet the usual definition of bullying, but it will still be addressed. Violence, threats, discrimination, sexual misconduct, coercion, hazing, intimidation, or deliberate humiliation may require immediate action even when the behavior has occurred only once.

Forms of bullying

Bullying may be physical, verbal, social, emotional, sexual, discriminatory, or digital.

Examples include:

- hitting, pushing, restraining, threatening harm, or damaging property;
- repeated insults, humiliation, ridicule, offensive nicknames, or hostile imitation;
- spreading rumors, manipulating friendships, or deliberately isolating a student;
- targeting a student because of nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, appearance, family circumstances, or another personal characteristic;
- unwanted sexual comments, rumors, images, gestures, messages, or pressure; and
- conduct intended to make a student feel unsafe, unwelcome, inferior, or excluded.

Cyberbullying may include threatening or humiliating messages, exclusion from online groups, sharing private material without consent, impersonation, spreading harmful content, repeated unwanted contact, or encouraging others to target or isolate someone.

Because students live together, online conduct can quickly affect classroom relationships, roommate arrangements, activities, meals, and free time. The school may therefore respond to online behavior even when it began away from campus or on a personal device. Bullying is not excused because it is described as humor, banter, tradition, initiation, retaliation, or a misunderstanding.

How we work to prevent bullying

Prevention depends on the daily culture of the school, not only on written rules. AIS-Salzburg seeks to maintain an academic and residential environment in which courtesy, respect, inclusion, and personal responsibility are expected. Students should feel that they are known as individuals, that concerns will be taken seriously, and that asking for help is a sign of maturity rather than weakness.

The school works to reduce opportunities for bullying by:

- maintaining appropriate supervision in classrooms, residence halls, activities, study periods, meals, excursions, and other shared settings;
- encouraging friendships across cultural, national, and language differences;
- addressing inappropriate language or behavior before it becomes an established pattern;
- teaching and reinforcing responsible digital citizenship;
- encouraging positive student leadership and peer relationships;
- recognizing kindness, responsibility, and inclusion;
- training employees to recognize, record, and report concerns; and
- reviewing incidents for recurring patterns, locations, relationships, or online behavior requiring further attention.

Faculty and Resident-Care staff members are expected to communicate promptly when they observe changes in friendships, roommate relationships, behavior, participation, well-being, or academic engagement.

Signs that may require attention

No single sign proves that bullying is occurring. However, parents and guardians should contact the school if they notice a significant or unexplained pattern such as:

- reluctance to attend class, activities, meals, study hall, or return to a residence floor;
- sudden changes in friendships or roommate relationships;
- repeated distress after using a phone, computer, messaging service, or social media;
- withdrawal, anxiety, anger, loss of confidence, or unusual secrecy;
- damaged or missing belongings;
- unexplained injuries;
- changes in sleep, appetite, attendance, participation, or academic performance;
- repeated references to humiliating jokes, names, rumors, exclusion, or threats; or
- fear of retaliation after seeking help.

These signs may have causes other than bullying, but they should not be ignored.

Reporting a concern

A student may speak with any trusted employee. They do not need to decide whether the behavior meets the formal definition of bullying before asking for help.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing with a teacher, Resident-Care staff member, the Dean of Students, the Headmaster, the Child Protection Lead, or another appropriate administrator.

Parents and guardians may contact the Dean of Students or Headmaster directly. When possible, please provide:

- what happened;
- when and where it occurred;
- who was involved;
- whether there were witnesses;
- whether the behavior has happened before;
- whether there are messages, screenshots, photographs, recordings, or other evidence; and
- whether anyone currently feels unsafe.

A concern should be reported even when all the facts are not yet known.

Anonymous reports will be considered, although anonymity may limit the school's ability to ask questions, verify information, communicate an outcome, or take formal action.

How the school responds

The school will respond in a way that is prompt, fair, proportionate, and appropriate to a small community in which students continue to study and, in most cases, live together.

The response will normally include the following steps:

1. Protect
Immediate safety, medical, emotional, academic, and residential needs are considered. Temporary arrangements may be made where necessary.
2. Listen
The student is given an opportunity to explain what happened and what support they need.
3. Record
Relevant facts, dates, locations, witnesses, words used, actions taken, and available evidence are documented.
4. Assign responsibility
The Headmaster or Dean of Students determines who will manage the matter and whether safeguarding or another school procedure applies.
5. Gather information
Relevant students and witnesses are spoken with separately, and available evidence is reviewed. Each person is treated fairly and without premature judgment.
6. Respond
The school determines appropriate support, protective measures, educational action, and disciplinary consequences. Parents or guardians are informed when appropriate.
7. Follow up
The school monitors the students involved, relevant relationships, the boarding or academic environment, and any risk of retaliation or recurrence.

A concern may be managed by the Dean of Students, Headmaster, or another appropriate administrator. The Child Protection Team will be involved when the matter also raises a safeguarding concern.

The school will share information with parents and guardians as far as safeguarding, privacy, and data-protection requirements permit. Confidential information about another student or employee, including specific disciplinary action, cannot normally be disclosed.

Support for students

A student who reports bullying will be treated with care and respect. They will not be required to confront the person involved or expected to resolve a serious concern without adult support.

Support may include:

- regular contact with a trusted employee;
- temporary changes to supervision, seating, rooms, schedules, groups, activities, or study arrangements;
- help preserving evidence or reporting online content;
- academic, pastoral, medical, or counseling support;
- communication with parents or guardians;
- protection from contact, retaliation, or further exclusion; and
- scheduled follow-up to confirm that the behavior has stopped.

Protective arrangements should not unnecessarily isolate or disadvantage the student who raised the concern. Where practical, the burden of change should not fall primarily on that student.

A student who has engaged in bullying will also receive guidance and support. This does not remove accountability. The aim is to help the student understand the harm caused, accept responsibility, change the behavior, and participate safely and respectfully in the community.

Restorative meetings or mediation will be considered only when they are safe, appropriate, and voluntarily accepted by the affected student. They will not be used to minimize serious conduct or pressure students into direct contact.

Consequences

Where bullying is substantiated, the school will consider:

- the seriousness, frequency, and duration of the behavior;
- the age and understanding of the students involved;
- the harm caused or reasonably foreseeable;
- any imbalance of power;
- whether discrimination, harassment, retaliation, or sexual misconduct was involved;
- previous concerns or disciplinary history;
- the student's willingness to accept responsibility; and
- the continuing safety and well-being of those affected.

Possible responses include guidance, restorative action, increased supervision, loss of privileges, changes to academic or residential arrangements, behavioral agreements, disciplinary probation, suspension, referral to the Disciplinary Committee, expulsion, or referral to external authorities where required. The purpose is not only to impose consequences. It is to stop the behavior, protect students, restore a safe community, and help students develop better judgment, empathy, and responsibility.

Confidentiality and retaliation

Concerns will be handled sensitively. Information will be shared only with those who need it for safeguarding, investigation, student support, decision-making, legal compliance, or the effective operation of the school. Complete confidentiality cannot be promised where a student may be at risk, the school must investigate, parents or guardians need to be informed, another person must be given a fair opportunity to respond, or information must be shared with professionals or authorities.

Retaliation against a student who raises a concern, supports another student, provides information, or participates in the school's response is prohibited and will be treated as a separate disciplinary matter.

A concern raised honestly and in good faith will not become a disciplinary matter simply because it cannot ultimately be substantiated.

How parents and guardians can help

Parents and guardians are essential partners in promoting student well-being.

We ask parents and guardians to:

- encourage their child to speak honestly and seek help early;
- contact the school promptly when they have a concern;
- avoid confronting another student or family directly;
- preserve relevant messages, screenshots, photographs, or recordings;
- avoid posting allegations or details on social media;
- support agreed safety, behavioral, or follow-up plans;
- reinforce respectful online and in-person conduct; and
- communicate respectfully with employees throughout the process.

Early communication often allows the school to address a concern before it becomes more serious.

Differences of opinion may occasionally arise about how a matter should be resolved. The school will listen carefully, explain the reasons for its decisions, and seek constructive cooperation whenever possible.

Contacting the school

Parents or guardians who have a concern about bullying or cyberbullying should contact:

Dean of Students

Laura Fox

lfox@ais-salzburg.at

Headmaster

Paul McLean

pmclean@ais-salzburg.at

School Office

office@ais-salzburg.at

+43 662 824617

In an immediate emergency, contact the school directly by telephone rather than relying only on email.

This overview summarizes the school's approach. The full *AIS-Salzburg Anti-Bullying and Anti-Cyberbullying Policy* remains the governing document.