



Sharjah American
International School

Non-Discrimination Policy

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with statutory regulations.

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| <i>Policy is reviewed by:</i> | |
| <i>Policy Review Date</i> | |
| <i>Policy Review Date</i> | <i>March, 2023</i> |
| <i>Policy Next Review Date</i> | <i>June, 2024</i> |

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SAIS has a commitment to maintaining an educational environment where racism and intolerance, including discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, national origin, gender identity, disability, marital or civil union status, homelessness or age, are not tolerated.

SAIS prohibits discrimination, including all forms of harassment and hate crimes, as well as retaliation, of/against any of its students, as such conduct is contrary to the mission of the school and its commitment to equal opportunity in education.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on a characteristic protected by law, such as race, color, religious creed, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, disability, or age. It is prohibited by SAIS and violates the law of UAE.

For purposes of this policy, “school” includes school – sponsored events, trips, sports events, and similar events connected with school. Further, any retaliation against any individual who has complained about discrimination or harassment, or any retaliation against any individual who has cooperated with an investigation of a discrimination, harassment or retaliation complaint, is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

SAIS takes allegations of discrimination, including all forms of harassment and hate crimes, as well as retaliation seriously and will respond promptly to complaints. Where it is determined that harassing conduct which violates the law and this policy has occurred, SAIS will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and will impose corrective action as necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate, which may include school-related discipline (refer to code of conduct).

SAIS also prohibits bullying, as set forth in the Bullying Policy section in the school’s code of conduct.

Definitions:

1. “Discrimination”

Discrimination is defined as treating people differently, or interfering with or preventing a person from enjoying the advantages, privileges or courses of study in the school because of an individual’s actual or perceived race, color, religious creed, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, age, or disability (i.e., protected status). A person may not be subjected to discipline or more severe punishment for wrongdoing, nor denied the same rights as other students, because of his/her membership in a protected class.

2. “Harassment”

Harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on race, color, religious creed, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, age. Discrimination and or harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Display or circulation of written materials or pictures that are degrading to a person or group based upon the criteria listed above.
- Verbal abuse or insults about, directed at, or made in the presence of an individual or group described above because of one of the criteria listed above.
- Any action or speech that contributes to, promotes or results in a hostile or discriminatory environment for an individual or group described above.
- Any action or speech that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent that it either (i) interferes with or limits the ability of an individual or group (as described above) to participate in or benefit from a school program or activity at SAIS; or (ii) creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.

Harassment can be communicated in any form, including verbally, in writing, or electronically via the Internet, cell phones, text messaging, social media or in any other way that shows disrespect to others based on race, color, religion, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, disability, or age.

What constitutes harassment is determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with the characteristics on which the harassment is based.

3. “Hate Crime”

Hate crime is defined as a crime motivated by hatred, bias, or prejudice, or where the victim is targeted or selected for the crime at least in part because of his/her actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, disability, or age. A hate crime may involve a physical attack, threat of bodily harm, physical intimidation, or damage to another’s property.

4. “Retaliation”

Retaliation is defined as any form of intimidation, or harassment by a student directed against any student, staff or other individual for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing of a report or complaint, for cooperating in an investigation under this policy or the *UAE law*, or for taking action consistent with the policy.

The definitions of discrimination and harassment are broad. In addition to the above examples, other unwelcome conduct, whether intended or not, that has the effect of creating a school environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to either male or female students may constitute discrimination and/or harassment.

Reporting Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment, Hate Crimes and Retaliation

If any student believes, in good faith, that he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination described above, the individual has a right to file a complaint with the Supervisor, Head of School, Vice Principal, or the Principal. This may be done orally or in writing. Teachers or other staff members who observe incidents of harassment involving students, or are in receipt of a complaint from a student, shall report such incidents immediately to the Supervisor, Head of School, Vice Principal, or the Principal.

Please note that while these procedures relate to the Schools' policy of promoting an educational setting free from discrimination and harassment, as detailed further in this policy, these procedures are not designed nor intended to limit the Schools' authority to discipline or take remedial action for conduct which the School deems unacceptable.

The School Management will work with an individual who files a complaint of discrimination or harassment; including conducting an investigation and holding conferences, in order to fairly and expeditiously resolve the complaint. Whenever possible, a conference should be scheduled during a time that does not conflict with regularly scheduled work and/or school programs.

Permissible Disciplinary Sanctions and Corrective Actions in Response to Discrimination, Harassment, Hate Crimes and Retaliation

Disciplinary sanctions and corrective actions may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- A written warning.
- Parent's meeting.
- Classroom transfer.
- Limiting or denying student access to a part or area of a school.
- Adult supervision on school premises.
- Exclusion from participation in school-sponsored functions, after-school programs, and/or extracurricular activities.
- Suspension.
- Exclusion, or discharge from school.
- An apology to the victim.
- Reporting the case to the Emirates Educational Governing Body (KHDA, SPEA, ADEK etc).
- Awareness training (to help students understand the impact of their behavior).
- Participation in empathy development, cultural diversity, anti-harassment, anti-bullying or inter-group relations programs.
- Mandatory counseling or any other action authorized by and consistent with the disciplinary code and this handbook.

False Charges

Any student who knowingly makes false charges or brings a malicious complaint may be subject to any of the disciplinary and/or corrective action(s) detailed above.

Student Responsibilities

Each student is responsible for:

- Complying with this policy and the UAE law.
- Ensuring that (s)he does not harass or discriminate against another person on school grounds or in a school-related function, event or activity because of that person's race, color, religion, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, disability, or age.
- Ensuring that (s)he does not bully another person on school grounds or in a school-related function, event or activity.
- Ensuring that (s)he does not retaliate against any other person for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing of a report or complaint, or for cooperating in an investigation of harassment, bullying, discrimination, or a hate crime; and Cooperating in the investigation of reports or complaints of harassment, bullying, discrimination, retaliation, or a hate crime.

Protection against Retaliation

The school will take appropriate steps to protect students from retaliation when they report, file a complaint of, or cooperate in an investigation of a violation of this policy. Threats or acts of retaliation, whether person-to-person, by electronic means, or through third parties, are serious offenses that will subject the violator to significant disciplinary and other corrective action, including short or long-term suspension, exclusion or expulsion.

Discrimination, Harassment, Hate Crimes and Retaliation Grievance Procedures

Informal Resolution of Complaints

Before initiating the formal procedure, the student may wish, if possible, to resolve the complaint on an informal basis.

- The student can raise the issue with the Supervisor, Head of School, Vice Principal, or the principal.
- The appropriate department or school administrator shall attempt, within his/her authority, to work with the individual to resolve the complaint fairly and expeditiously within three (3) working days of receiving the complaint.

- Whichever option is chosen, attempts will be made to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the student who has made the complaint. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution, or if the student does not choose informal resolution, then the student can begin the formal complaint process.

Formal Resolution of Discrimination and Harassment Concerns

A student may file the complaint in writing to the Supervisor, Head of School, Vice Principal, or the Principal no later than five (5) calendar days after the alleged discriminatory practice has occurred for an expeditious investigation to be conducted, unless extenuating circumstances exist. However, all students should know that the school management will investigate any complaint no matter when it is filed. The student shall provide a written complaint that will state the name of the individual and the location of the place where the alleged discriminatory practice has occurred, the basis for the complaint and the corrective action the student is seeking.

The school management will conduct the necessary investigation promptly after receiving the complaint. During its investigation, a member of the SLT shall contact those individuals that have been referred to as having pertinent information related to the complaint. This process shall include, at a minimum, contacting the complainant and the person against whom the complaint was filed and/or the Principal or appropriate authority involved. Strict timelines cannot be set for conducting the investigation because each set of circumstances is different. For example, sometimes the employees or students that are involved in the complaint are not immediately available. The school management, however, will make sure that the complaint is handled as quickly as feasible and will strive to complete the investigation within ten (10) working days. When more than ten (10) working days is required for the investigation, the school management shall inform the student who filed the complaint that the investigation is still ongoing.

While the School cannot guarantee complete confidentiality given the nature of the investigatory process, the investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

After completing the formal investigation of the complaint, the school management shall make a decision on the complaint and shall inform the complainant and the person against whom the complaint was filed, of the results of the investigation. If the school management finds that there is reasonable cause for believing that a discriminatory or harassing practice has occurred, the school management refers the matter to a disciplinary committee for appropriate action, up to and including discipline for either the employee or the student(s) who engaged in the harassing conduct.

If no satisfactory resolution can be reached through the informal or formal resolution procedures detailed above, the student or employee has the right to take the complaint to the Emirates Educational Governing Body (KHDA, SPEA, ADEK or MOE).

Policy Review

This policy is to be reviewed annually, though if any deficiencies or weaknesses in children protection arrangements are identified within the year, they will be remedied without delay. The Child Protection Officers will undertake an annual review of the school's Child Protection policy and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. The list of key contacts on the cover sheet is kept up to date.