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Policy on
Cyber Safeguarding and
Student Code of Conduct
in Distance Learning

FUNCTION	Policy on cyber safeguarding and student code of conduct in Distance Learning
CATEGORY	Statutory
STATUS	Implemented
ISSUED FOR	All stakeholders of the school community
VERSION	Roll out Term 1-2021

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1. Rationale

With the shift in learning method to online platform, it is essential to ensure students good code of conduct during Distance Learning (DL).

The online platform with Google classroom is used to raise awareness among students about school's vision, mission and values. We have made it mandatory to ensure collaboration of students, parents and staff in this regard so that the students comply with the various rules and regulations during the period of digital distance learning.

2. Scope

This policy is set to serve as a guideline for all students and other stakeholders of the school community engaged in digital learning to ensure that their code of conduct is compatible with the dynamic world of technology and at the same time are committed to provide an ethical remote classroom environment.

3. Statement of Policy

The policy is implemented through a detailed procedure which details the principles and expectations set out in the school's Code of Conduct Policy and should be read by students, parents and teachers. The school network and the internet provide valuable tools to support learning and the school recognizes that social networks and digital communications are an integral part of our socialization and interactions. In order to maximize the benefits of online collaboration, the school is extra mindful of the potential risks to young people's wellbeing through the continual exposure to social media.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The following guidelines have been drawn up for the students' online safety and smooth conduct of distance learning with identified roles and responsibilities of most stakeholders.

Parents

Accountable and responsible for:

- Providing laptop or a device for distance learning of their ward.
- Refraining from filming or disclosing the live broadcast.
- Being present for guidance/monitoring during the broadcasting period whenever necessary.
- Secure environment readiness for students in their homes by providing a special work station with Internet.
- Ensure the student is well groomed during lessons.
- Support and encourage students to attend the classes regularly and complete all assignments set.
- Comply with the school's decision regarding any offence committed by their child.
- Follow instructions or guidelines and understand the policy on students' code of conduct for Distance Learning Initiative issued by the school.

Teachers

- Use the technology, platform or devices provided by the school in formal activities and tutorials that are compatible with distance learning program's laws and regulations.
- Ensure usage of the Internet is fully dedicated to supporting educational and research objectives and in line with DL objectives.
- Adhere to the rules of proper discipline and conduct in electronic communication and maintain students' personal information as confidential.
- Follow all instructions / guidelines for the Distance Learning Initiative issued by the School, KHDA and Ministry of Education.

School administration

Led by the Academic Director, Principal and Supervisor ensure the following:

- Prepare schedules for the distance education periods according to the methodology that has been sent from the school's technology department.
- Monitor the impact of training on teachers and their readiness for distance learning.
- Coordinate with the technical support team to solve and avoid any technical issues that may disrupt distance learning.
- Ensure and make provision for devices and internet availability to all teachers for online teaching.
- Ensure that the teacher uses professional language during broadcasting.
- Prepare alternative plans and timetables to cope with any challenges that may arise when implementing the initiative, especially when a teacher is absent due to unavoidable circumstances.
- Ensure the quality of the activities and educational materials provided to students in the virtual school.
- Ensure the teachers are aware of their responsibilities towards their students and are accountable for the same.

Governing body of school

Ensure suitable senior members of staff is appointed and entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding and child protection (online safety included) with time, funding, resources and support.

5. Safeguarding against cyber crime and cyber bullying during Distance Learning

Cybercrime is a crime that involves a computer and a network which is used to threaten a person's security and financial health.

Cyber-bullying is a form of cybercrime and can be defined as the use of electronic devices such as computers, tablets/iPads, cell phones, or other devices to send or post texts or images intended to hurt, intimidate, or embarrass another person.

There are several steps students and parents can take to ensure their safety and security, as listed below.

Guidelines to students and Parents

- Do not share the Class meeting code on social media and with non-participants.
- Avoid using your Personal Meeting ID (PMI) to host public events.
- Familiarize yourself with the settings and features of the digital platform you are using.

- A password adds an additional layer of security, one that may be useful for meetings of regular class hours.
- Students must wait for a new class code in case a teacher is forced to cancel the running session for the same reason.
- You must only open links to assignments and online classes that are provided to you by your teachers.
- Open links only from teachers if they are from a secure (safe) site. To identify a safe site look for a's' in "https://" at the beginning of a link. *For example, "https://www.zoom.com" is a secure site, but "http://hello.com" is not!*
- Do not open links/documents that look fishy, and if you are confused, ask your parents for advice.
- Messages, links and/or documents that are messaged or emailed to you from an unknown sender, must never be opened or replied to. Do not download attachments from any unknown senders, as it may contain malware that could potentially hack into your whole system and corrupt it.
- Only trusted search engines like Google or Safari, must be used for any research or online homework that is to be completed.
- If anything looks or feels wrong on your computer, show it to your parents immediately.
- Always make sure that your parents know what classes you are attending, what homework you have, and show them the sites you visit.
- Always ask your parents if you can visit a website/ link sent to you by your friend or someone who is not a teacher.
- Parents must always monitor their kids as they progress through their classes to ensure that kids are not exposing themselves to inappropriate content. They must also equip their children to understand what kind of dangers the internet poses, and how to handle such issues on an internet platform.
- If you face problems with somebody writing mean comments about you or someone else, tell your parents immediately!
- If someone you do not know keeps messaging you, block them on the platform you use and inform your parents immediately.
- If you are meeting up with classmates/friends on Zoom or any other web conferencing tool, make sure to set a password for the meeting to ensure that strangers cannot access the video conference.
- Do not send inappropriate or dangerous content to your friends.
- Do not give out personal/family/friends' information such as home address, telephone number, passwords, photos or any other information while online.
- Avoid sites with multiple pop-ups that direct you to other sites.
- Keep your passwords to yourself. Change your password frequently and share them with your parents ONLY.
- If you would not say something to someone's face, you should not post it, or message it to them.
- Never encourage cyber bullying (which includes shaming, harassment, ousting, etc.) and report it immediately if you know that it's happening to you or anyone around you.

Steps to take if you are being cyber bullied or if you feel like cyber crime is being committed

Students who are victims of cyber bullying may feel upset and embarrassed and they don't know what they can do about it. Following are steps that should be taken to handle these situations and get the help they need.

STUDENTS

- Keep records: Take screenshots and save everything. Make sure this includes texts, images, dates, time, name of sender / phone number / email and descriptions.
- Ignore the bully: Very often cyber bullies will be discouraged if their victims just ignore them. Do not engage, respond or encourage the behaviour.
- Block the person: The student should immediately block the bully on the platform and any other social media sites with which they are able to contact him/her. In most cases, blocking someone prevents them from being able to locate others' profile.
- Change the email or phone number: Another way that students can cut off a cyberbully is by changing his/her email address and phone number. This way, the bully may have no way to get in contact to continue the behaviour.
- Tell an adult: Students should let their parents know what's going on so that they can get help and emotional support. In addition, telling someone at the school, like a teacher or counsellor can go a long way toward ending cyber bullying.

TEACHERS

- When a student reports an incident of cyber bullying, the same must be recorded and reported to the Supervisor / Principal immediately

Prevention of cyber bullying

Since the consequences of cyber bullying can be so severe, for the bully as well as the victim, it's imperative for teachers, parents and even other students to work together to prevent cyber bullying. The following are some strategies to be adopted by all stakeholders to help students.

STUDENTS

- Think before making every post online and avoid making posts that can have a negative effect on your reputation.
- Learn what cyber bullying is and what behaviours are involved in cyber bullying.
- Avoid putting inappropriate photos online because they can be the fuel that cyber bullies use.
- Delete messages from unknown people without opening them. Also, avoid opening messages from known bullies.
- Treat everyone with respect.

PARENTS

- Monitor children's online activities.
- Take away children's mobile devices if they are caught mistreating people online.
- Teach children how to use technology responsibly.
- Find out who your children are speaking to and making friends with online.
- Learn how to use the technology that children are using in order to get a perspective of their online world.

TEACHERS

- Teachers should encourage students that it's OK for them to report any online abuse that happens to them and ensure them that the issue will be handled in a safe manner.
- Create an environment of mutual respect and tolerance in the classroom.
- Teach students how to be respectful to others online.
- Work closely with parents so they understand cyber bullying.
- Implement cyber security and social media policy in the classroom.

Preventive measures used by regulating authorities

In case of bullying fellow students on the online platforms, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) have strong regulations proposed for cyber bullying. If students are found bullying their peers or juniors, action would be taken against them based on the level of severity as mentioned.

- If the student is found to indulge in cyber bullying, he/she would be reported to the Supervisor and Principal for the misconduct.
- The parents of the students will be duly informed.
- In case of repeated offence, the matter may be reported to KHDA, and the concerned student must perform a community service work within the school or as deemed fit by KHDA, under their regulation.
- Buds Public school has clarified and abided by the preventive actions and methods about cyber bullying in its Cyber Bullying Policy.

6. Misuse of Social Media

- Any misuse of social media tools to defame or slander anyone would bear severe consequences
- If any student is found using slanderous and libellous content against the school, teachers or students it should be brought to the attention of the Class Teacher and Supervisor immediately.

  Students will face the following action taken against them for their misconduct:
- First time violation will result in the student receiving an official written warning from the school.
- A repeat of the incident will be reported to the parents by the Supervisor and the student is expected to apologize to the person affected by this act and the student will be counselled.

7. Student Code of Conduct during Digital Learning

The digital classrooms are real classrooms with real teachers; therefore, appropriate student behaviour is expected.

Teachers are to ensure that all students understand how to behave in an online environment.
The students must follow the code of conduct which addresses student interaction with the school staff, fellow students, as well as their individual actions:

Interaction with Teachers
- Students should communicate with teachers in a polite, respectful and courteous manner.
- Students must communicate with teachers in complete sentences.
- The use of slang or social media languages, emojis, etc. is prohibited.
- Students are not to use obscene, profane, threatening or disrespectful language or images in any communication with teachers and fellow students.
- Students must mute themselves on teachers' calls.
- Students must respond to teachers by raising their hands and then unmuting their microphone when asked by the teacher
- Students must not disrupt the class with any means of distraction (music, sign language, etc.).
- The profile name used must be the student name as per the passport and must not have any link with obscenity, profanity, socially banned groups or group members etc.
- Removing, blocking, annotating or disfiguring teachers' work will be taken very seriously.
- Students should not record the contents of online teaching.

Interaction with other users
- All communications with other students in the online class must be of course-related nature.
- Sending of any unsolicited email to other students is prohibited.
- All mails should be sent from their school issued mail account.
- Students must not request for other users' passwords and must not open their accounts
- All communications with other students in any forum, course related email, discussion posts, etc., must be polite, courteous and in a respectful manner.
- Students are not to use obscene, profane, threatening, or disrespectful language or images in any communications with other BPS students.
- Students are advised to not share the class codes of any grade/subject with third party and must report to the class teacher/supervisor in case third party prompts her/him to do so.

General
- Students must use the school issued email ID and a profile picture that is appropriate for an educational environment.
- Buds Public School reserves the right to determine if the student's profile picture is inappropriate.
- Students must ensure they use a designated work station which is clear of clutter (for example they should not attend their classes – both synchronous and asynchronous on a bed)
- Students must ensure they are well-groomed and dressed neatly.
- Students should not eat during the digital classes

8. Disciplinary Action
In the event there is a claim that a student has violated this Code of Conduct, he/she will be notified of the suspected violation and given an opportunity to present an explanation.

- Any student who violates this Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.
- Any breach of these rules will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct Policy and may lead to exclusion from the school.

Violations to student code of conduct in online classroom will initiate the following procedure:
- Upon the violation, the teacher will complete and submit a report to the Supervisor.
- Based on the report, disciplinary action will be taken as per the Code of Conduct Policy of the school and the Digital Learning Violations and Actions which are spelt out below.

Digital Learning Violations and Actions based on Levels of Violations

Level	Violation	Action
1	Repeated tardiness without an acceptable excuse	Verbal warning If offence is still repeated, parent is sent an email
1	Eating during the digital learning classes	Verbal warning If offence is still repeated, parent is sent an email
1	Wearing inappropriate clothes which are prohibited during synchronous sessions	Verbal warning If offence is still repeated, parent is sent an email
2	Annotating teachers' and students' work on shared screen without permission	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book & informs the parent telephonically.
2	Deleting teachers and students work from digital learning platforms	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book & informs the parent telephonically.
2	Provoking other students to not attend or pay attention to synchronous or asynchronous sessions	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book & informs the parent telephonically.
2	Removing teachers, students from the digital learning platform	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book & informs the parent telephonically.
3	Bullying of any kind eg: making fun, using obscene, profane, or disrespectful language, threatening, blackmailing, sending indecent messages, etc	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book & informs the parent telephonically. Student also gets warning of suspension from digital learning in case the violation is repeated.
3	Blocking or interrupting teachers during distance learning	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book & informs the parent telephonically.
3	Sharing password/class codes with others	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book & informs the parent telephonically.
3	Missing live sessions without prior permission	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book & informs the parent telephonically.

3	Personal communication among students using chat option (text) or microphone without teachers' permission which may cause distraction during the live session	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book & informs the parent telephonically. Student submits an undertaking in writing for accepting the violation and assurance of not repeating the same.
3	Sharing e-mails and information about other teachers and students	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book & informs the parent telephonically. The case is referred to the counsellor.
3	Commenting or cursing of racial and communal nature using the online teaching platform	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book & informs the parent telephonically. Principal is informed for student's suspension from school/digital learning for 3 to 5 days.
3	Using inappropriate profile picture and login names which may cause communal disturbance and distractions to others	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book & informs the parent telephonically. Principal is informed for student's suspension from school/digital learning for 3 to 5 days.
3	Sharing, downloading or installing of illegal/ malicious software	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book. Parents are called to school to give an undertaking and assurance on their ward's behalf.
3	Abusing or insulting official visitors during periods during the live broadcast	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book. Parents are called to school to give an undertaking and assurance on their ward's behalf.
3	Hacking/intercepting the online learning platform, email of teachers and students, using their passwords and data without prior permission	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book. Parents are called to school to give an undertaking and assurance on their ward's behalf.
3	Destroying or disfiguring their works/ assignments	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book. Parents are called to school to give an undertaking and assurance on their ward's behalf.
3	Recording the online content, sharing/ displaying teacher's profile picture, videos, making memes and showing disrespect of any kind.	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book. Parents are called to school to give an undertaking and assurance on their ward's behalf.
3	Intentionally tempering, removing the device in the class room, or any part of it or encouraging others to do the same in	Supervisor records the violation in the incident record book. Parents are called to school to give an undertaking and assurance on their ward's behalf.

		Supervisor records the repeated violation in the incident record book.
	Repeat of level 2 and 3	Parents are called to school to share the school's final decision.
		Student is subject to be expelled from the online classes.

9. Procedures to deal with behaviour issues of SOD

When SODs commit a behavioural offence during distance learning, the Inclusive Support Team (IST) and the Learning Support Assistant (LSA) shall coordinate with each other and with the class teacher to study the behaviour of the student to determine the relationship between the offence and the disability, and then apply the same measures in reference to the Inclusion Policy.

10. Guidelines to online ethical behaviour

- Students are not allowed to publish personal details of fellow pupils or members of staff on the Internet without their permission.
- Students should refrain from retaliating or replying to offensive emails or messages but instead block or report them to their class teacher.
- Students must understand that online contacts may lie about their identity and information on the internet can be unreliable and be very cautious about who and what they believe.
- Students must ensure that when using any social network, the privacy settings are set correctly.
- Students must not create hyperlinks or any associated files unless they are from a trusted source.

11. Google Classroom during Distance Learning

In the event of the following:
- Student absence
- Student disconnecting from the live session due to technical difficulties or any other reason.
- Teacher is unable to complete the assignments during the lesson.

The following measures may be adopted:
- The assignments may be assigned to the asynchronous lessons based on the school schedule.
- The assignments may be assigned to self-education based on the school schedule.

12. Online continuous comprehensive evaluation guidelines and Term end Exam regulations to check and correct malpractices

Cheating offences during tests and exams are subject to rules and regulations issued in this regard.

13. Information for Parents

The school realizes that technology is constantly evolving and that social media has become an integral part of how students socialize and interact.

This can be a daunting area for parents and it can be difficult to understand how your ward is using the internet. We encourage you to discuss the guidance set out above with your ward.

14. Definitions
- Student Code of Conduct: A set of procedures to help control student behaviour when in a learning environment.
- Synchronous Learning: Online or distance education that happens in real time. (That is live, interactive sessions)
- Asynchronous Learning: Learning that happens in real time through online channels anytime, anywhere without real-time interaction
- Online Learning: An educational environment in which online learners can access course-related materials, resources, and communication via synchronous or asynchronous delivery methods via web conferencing or other digital platforms.
- Blended learning describes any combination of online learning and site-based, face-to-face education.
- Digital learning: Encompasses online learning and blended learning
- Bullying: Any frequent form of intentional psychological, physical, verbal, electronic, or digital abuse or intimidation, or threat by a student or group of students toward one or more students or towards school staff.
- Cyber bullying: Using the means of communication and information technology to insult, use profanity towards, threaten with violence, slander, or blackmail someone.

15. References
- *Student Behaviour Management Distance Learning 2020 (MOE) https://www.moe.gov.ae/Ar/Legislation/Documents/Student%20Behaviour%20Management_Dist ance %20Learning%202020_English.pdf*
- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Cyber Bullying Policy*
- *Guidelines for School Leaders and Teachers on Homework and Assignments (MOE)*

16. Effective and revision dates
This policy is effective from April 2021 and will be reviewed in March 2022

Everything that is not mentioned in this policy applies to the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct Policy in a manner that does not conflict with the Digital learning encompasses online learning and blended.