

Barachel Christian Academy

POLICY REGARDING ANTI-BULLYING

1. INTRODUCTION

Bullying is hurting or frightening other persons, often forcing them to do something they do not want to do. Bullies are found in most schools, even in the most disciplined ones. Both girls and boys can be bullied or be bullies.

2. TYPES OF BULLYING

We can distinguish between different kinds of bullying.

2.1 PHYSICAL BULLYING

These include violent and physical hurtful acts like punching, kicking, slapping, biting, etc. (assault). It also includes acts that creates fear like taking another person's possessions under threat or damaging another person's property.

2.2 VERBAL BULLYING

These are acts like teasing; name-calling; swearing; threats; humiliation.

2.3 SEXUAL BULLYING

This includes sexual harassment; unwanted touches; inappropriate sexual comments; exhibitionism (flashing); voyeurism.

2.4 PSYCHOSOCIAL BULLYING

It is also known as emotional bullying and involves acts of ostracizing; ignoring; spreading mean rumours (gossiping); rejection; blackmailing.

2.5 CYBER BULLYING

With the advance of technology this new form of bullying is very prevalent among the youth of today. It entails the spread of hurtful messages and images via e-mails; sms'es; chat rooms and the like.

2.6 INITIATION

At those schools that still allows this practice it is nothing else but a legalized form of bullying which includes hurting (physical); teasing; name-calling; forcing fellow-learners to do something against their will; humiliation and more.

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3. VICTIMS OF BULLYING

Learners who are being bullied the most include

- smaller children;
- physically weak children;
- timid / shy children;
- sensitive children;
- children who wear spectacles or braces. These children are usually teased and called names;
- disabled children;
- girls because they are weaker;
- poorer children are often teased about their clothing;
- richer children are threatened to part with their possessions, like supplying the bully with money;
- minority race groups.

Learners can also be indirect victims of bullying e.g. Some children if they are not being bullied are especially nice to the bully so as not to get in their bad books and be bullied too. They will go out of their way to praise or award bullies. They are indirectly victims because of their fear of the bully.

4. WHO ARE THE BULLIES AND WHY DO THEY BULLY?

- “Learners who are bullies often come from dysfunctional homes. These are often exposed to domestic violence, and come from a background with little or inconsistent parental discipline. They know no rules and hardly receive parental supervision.” (S.A. Human Rights Commission 2006 – 7)
- Bullies are usually bigger and / or older than their victims therefore stronger.
- The bully may want something e.g. money from the victim.
- The bully himself had been or are bullied at home.
- No one may be interested in the bully so he / she bullies to attract attention.
- The bully may bully for the fun of it or because he gets a “sick” satisfaction from it.
- In some cases the bully is not very bright and does not fare well in his schoolwork. He then feels angry and envious towards other learners (especially the bright ones).
- The bully may be just plain “rotten” or sadistic and cannot help himself from hurting or causing distress to others.

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5. THE IMPACT OF BULLYING ON LEARNERS

- (a) Learners fear going to school. They play truant with the resultant poor scholastic achievement.
- (b) Learners begin to hate school and become drop-outs.
- (c) Some learners start believing that there is something wrong with them. It destroys their confidence and self-esteem – making them feel weak, helpless and useless.
- (d) Some learners may become withdrawn and depressed – with all the negative implications.
- (e) Other learners may take drastic steps and commit suicide in order to escape the bullying.
- (f) Bullying can also have an effect on the learners that are not being bullied e.g.
 - it creates tension in class because learners may have sympathy with the victim, but are afraid of the bully and do not speak out.
 - They become subservient to the bully. Sometimes they become bullies themselves.

6. CORE STATEMENT

- (a) Any form of bullying (whether by learners or educators) will not be tolerated at this school.
- (b) Any learner found guilty of bullying other learners will face disciplinary actions as set out in the school's Code of Conduct, which may lead to suspension or even expulsion.
- (c) Educators who bully learners will likewise face disciplinary action.
- (d) The school will not intervene if assault charges are laid with the SAPS, by victims or their parents, against the bullies. The school will let the law run its course.

7. PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The School Management will do everything in their power to prevent, or in the least minimize incidents of bullying at the school.

7.1 LEARNERS

The learners must be taught

- (a) That if they are being bullied it is not their fault. They are the victims and not the perpetrators. They should not feel any guilt or shame.
- (b) Learners must be encouraged to report bullying. They must tell their parents, and educator or counselor at school.

7.2 PARENTS

The parents must be asked to feel free to inform the school if any of their children are being bullied. They must be assured of the maximum co-operation by the school.

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7.3 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT.

- Warn learners not to bully others.
- Encourage learners to report incidents of bullying. Establish a teenline.
- Teach learners to respect each other's bodies and property.
- Make learners aware of the serious consequences of bullying.
- Zero tolerance must be shown towards bullying. Sanctions for bullying must be clearly recorded in the school's Code of Conduct. All learners and parents must be made aware of these sanctions.
- Investigate and act on any claims of bullying by learners.
- Educators and prefects on yard duty should pay particular attention to patrolling the bullying "hotspots" before school starts and during intervals.
- Have ongoing anti-bullying campaigns.
- Let the learners sign an Anti-bullying Pledge.

8. DEFINITIONS.

Bullying hotspots are places, usually secluded, where bullying tends to take place more often.

Exhibitionism is showing off parts of the naked body that is conventionally covered by clothes.

Expulsion means to be expelled – put out of school.

Initiation is a practice where new learners at school are forced by the existing learners to do something, usually humiliating, to be accepted.

Ostracising means exclusion from society.

South African Human Rights Commission is a constitutional body charged with protecting and promoting human rights.

Sexual harassment refers to lewd gestures, unwanted touching, unwanted sexual attention, etc. directed at the opposite sex.

Teenline is a phone number or numbers that learners (teenagers) can phone if they need counseling or advice on a number of issues.

Voyeurism is getting sexual pleasure by (secretly) watching a naked person or persons in sexual situations.