

# anti-bullying policy

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our learners so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere that fosters knowledge and promotes respect. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. It will not be tolerated.

### Objectives of this Policy

This policy outlines the school's position on bullying and establishes the procedures and processes for responding to bullying incidents. The specific objectives of the policy include:

- Support other school rules, code of conduct, policies and programmes in ensuring a caring, friendly and safe environment for all learners
- Assist in creating a climate in which the school governing body (SGB), educators, non-teaching staff and learners are informed about bullying, understand the various types of bullying that can occur and are empowered to report it and act against it
- Assist in creating a climate in which parents and caregivers are informed about bullying, understand the various types of bullying that can occur and are empowered to report it and act against it
- Establish the framework and procedures for dealing consistently and effectively to all cases of bullying

### What Is Bullying?

Bullying comprises repeatedly singling out and deliberately hurting or harming a child with the aim of hurting or harming them physically or psychologically. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying takes many different forms. These include:

- **Physical bullying:** This includes hitting, pushing, slapping, tripping, or pulling someone's hair, as well as forcibly taking another child's lunch, money or things
- **Verbal bullying:** This includes threats, insults, ridiculing, name-calling and making racist or sexual slurs
- **Non-verbal bullying:** Includes writing hurtful messages, letters or graffiti, or distributing pictures and videos that shame, hurt or damage a child's reputation
- **Social bullying:** Includes gossiping, spreading rumours, leaving people out on purpose and breaking up friendships
- **Sexual bullying:** Includes passing inappropriate notes, jokes, pictures, taunts and starting rumours of a sexual nature. It can also involve uninvited touching and forced sexual behaviour
- **Cyber bullying:** This includes using the internet, mobile phones or other electronic technologies to insult and harass, spread rumours, damage children's reputations, and distribute harmful videos and pictures.

### Why is it important to address bullying?

- Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect
- Learners need to be empowered with the knowledge and skills to prevent and deal with bullying.
- It is the school's responsibility to ensure that learners who are bullied receive help support and assistance they need
- It is also the school's responsibility to discipline the perpetrators of bullying and support them in learning different and appropriate ways of behaving.

### Rights and responsibilities

Every learner in this school has the right to:

- Learn, work and play without fear of being hurt emotionally or physically
- Be happy and free to play with friends
- Feel a sense of belonging, acceptance and friendship
- Be included in class and playground activity
- Be treated politely and with respect by others
- Ask for bullying to stop and ask for help if it does not.

Every learner has the responsibility to:

- Be respectful and friendly to others without discrimination
- Co-operate with others in school activities
- Report behaviour that may constitute bullying.

Every educator and staff member has the responsibility to:

- Treat children with dignity and respect and help to create an respectful school environment that promotes human rights
- To monitor children's behaviour and note and investigate behaviour that may signal bullying
- Intervene immediately in cases of suspected bullying
- Report all bullying incidents for further action.

Every parent or caregiver has the responsibility to:

- Report suspected bullying to the school authorities
- Work with school authorities in cases of bullying and follow school procedures on responding to bullying.

The school governing body has the responsibility to:

- Deal decisively with bullying when it occurs
- Ensure that procedures and processes are followed consistently and fairly
- In line with the South African Schools Act, initiate and steer disciplinary procedures in cases of serious misconduct.

## Procedures

Class teachers are responsible for dealing with minor or once-off incidents or problematic learner behaviour and relationships. More serious incidents should be reported to the school principal for further action. Once an incident is reported, the principal should:

- Interview separately the learners involved and witnesses to establish what happened
- Inform both children's parents or caregivers of the incident and call a meeting to discuss the incident and the way forward
- Determine the appropriate intervention and sanctions
- Report the incident to the SGB where appropriate
- Provide the bullied child with the necessary help and support, including referrals to counselling or other services where necessary
- Monitor the learners involved to ensure that the bullying does not continue
- Make a record of the incident to support monitoring and any future intervention.

## Outcomes

The school's response to all reported incidents of bullying will be sensitive and the consequences will be determined by the severity of the bullying, the age of the learners and the history of the incident. Possible consequences (in no particular order) include:

- Requiring the bullying to apologise verbally or in writing to the victim
- A verbal or written warning
- Detention
- Establishing a behavioural contract
- Referral to a counsellor
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Community service
- A formal disciplinary process

Wherever possible, measures will have a rehabilitative component aimed at addressing problem-behaviour.

## Signatories

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_