



# Brescia House

SCHOOL

## POLICY DOCUMENT

### SCHOOL BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

It is your right and responsibility to report bullying, whether it happens to you or to someone else.

#### WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BULLIED:

- ✦ Tell the bully to STOP.
- ✦ Seek help. Talk about it to someone you trust.
- ✦ Report it to a Buddy, Peer Counsellor or Teacher. Action will be taken against the bully.

#### WHAT TO DO IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED:

- ✦ Care enough to do something about it whether it affects you personally or not.
- ✦ Early intervention can defuse a situation before it gets out of control
- ✦ Report it to a Buddy, Peer Counsellor or teacher.

#### TO PREVENT BULLYING:

- ✦ Respect yourself and others.
- ✦ Work hard to create a pleasant, safe and caring school environment for all.
- ✦ Learn to tolerate and accept individual differences.

### SUPPORT THE SCHOOL POLICY ON BULLYING

#### POLICY ON BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Our ultimate aim is to raise children who will neither be bullied – nor accept being bullied.  
(Sue Berne, 1996)

Every child has the right to feel valued and safe at school. There will be zero tolerance with Bullying.

#### DEFINITION

**Bullying is a deliberate act of undermining another individual for the benefit of those involved. Bullying is done to gain power over, status, reputation, and group control and in some cases, for recognition, peer pressure motivated by jealousy, revenge and even boredom. Often a learner who has been victimised him/herself will adopt bullying behaviour.**

#### **Bullying often results in:**






- Wilful and deliberate harmful behaviour patterns – it can be direct or indirect.
- Repetitive attacks which causes distress resulting in fear of the threat of future attacks – could be daily.
- An imbalance of power – the bully has more power and control over the situation and the victim: and abuses the victim who is in a vulnerable position. Bullies can use their position, strength, size or age to control and intimidate.
- Adverse effects on the victim

It is by nature:




- Verbal – name-calling, teasing cause emotional stress. It normally is done over a period of time and humiliates and embarrasses the victim. As it grows in intensity, it can turn into physical bullying.
- Physical – a range of physical harm including pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking; too more serious incidents such as head bashing, throwing down stairs and assault.
- Social – Isolation and exclusion of victim from group or class socially.
- Psychological – is less tangible but is also very negative and harmful. Generally takes the form of isolating and ostracising the peers or group – partially or complete. Victims are left out of games and social activities e.g. a child is not invited to a birthday party or is overlooked by all when groups are being chosen – teachers can avoid this by using alternative methods to choose groups. This can be devastating affect on the victim's confidence, self-esteem and dignity.
- An attitude rather than an act
- Hard to detect especially once identified and/or reported, bullying then becomes subtler and subversive – with lack of external evidence.

**Identification of bullying:** Calling hurtful or racist names, being picked on continuously, deliberately punching, hitting, bumping, pushing, teasing, mocking, spreading rumours and repeatedly excluding or “putting down” someone.

#### **Where Bullying occurs:**

-  In the classroom, especially if the teacher is out of the classroom
-  In the playground – especially secluded or unsupervised area
-  In the toilets
-  In corridors and stairwells
-  In the car park

#### **Children have a right to:**

-  human dignity
-  feeling safe
-  be respected
-  be valued
-  be different
-  learn an grow as an individual
-  be free from harm
-  be protected against abuse.

### **PRINCIPLES**

**We, the staff, learners and parents of Brescia House School:**

- will not tolerate bullying in any form
- will respect each others' rights to human dignity
- promise to promote a safe and caring school environment
- expect a high standard of behaviour at all times
- will offer support to all learners through our School Support Team, Educators and Counsellors

## **LEARNERS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Embodied in the policy of BRESCIA HOUSE SCHOOL is the right of every learner:

- to privacy;
- to approach all members of staff (including the Headmistress or the Executive Headmistress) on any matter they wish to discuss
- to be free of victimisation by any other learner or member of staff;
- to be free of discrimination based on race, religion, nationality, gender or economic status.
- to learn without being distracted by other learners

But with rights go responsibilities. We expect learners to respond to their rights by:

- using good judgement and seeking good advice from their parents and educators.
- striving to do their best in their studies and to participate in class activities.
- being punctual at all times, being attentive in class and applying themselves to their work.
- by attending all their lessons unless excused for some special reason. It is the responsibility of the learner to make up any work missed as a result of absence of any kind.
- showing consideration of the feelings of others in what they say and do at all times. By not distracting other learners from the tasks set for them.
- accepting and supporting those learners who are selected as Monitors in their Grade 6 year or grade 12 learners.
- respecting the rights and property of other learners and educators.

## **PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN INVESTIGATING AND REPORTING BULLYING**

**All investigations and reports will be treated in the strictest confidence.**

- Care enough to do something about it whether it affects you personally or not.
- Note the date, time and place of the incident as well as names of those involved.
- Report the matter to the relevant Grade Head/Exec member or the Headmistress.
- The bully/bullies and victim/s will be interviewed separately in order to get both sides of the story.
- Learners may have a representative present during the interview.
- Interviews/discussions will be recorded in writing.
- The parents of those involved will be notified telephonically or in writing.
- The parents and their children may be called to a meeting at the school.
- If a disciplinary hearing is required, the disciplinary committee will conduct the hearing according to the procedures as set out in the Code of Conduct for learners.
- Involve learners in the solution – behaviour change rather than punitive action is preferable
- Focus on “perfect social school society” with no bullies

## **DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS**

The following actions may be taken against a bully after a fair hearing has been conducted:

- The bully/bullies may be required to sit outside the Headmistress' office during a series of breaks
- Certain privileges may be withdrawn
- The bully/bullies may be required to do community service at the school or in the neighbourhood.
- The bully/bullies may be required to attend regular sessions with a school Counsellor or Psychologist.
- In the case of extreme and/or repeated acts of bullying, the bully/bullies may be suspended and asked to attend a disciplinary hearing.

## TECHNIQUES FOR THE VICTIM OF BULLYING TO USE:

- Use 'self talk'. (silent message with positive thoughts given to child to help her cope)
- Invisible shield / warm light surrounding you / words bounce off
- Stay focused / walk with purpose
- Look bully in eye / I want you to stop / walk away
- ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING
- Ignore or exaggeration – take wind out of sails of bully as she does not expect you to respond this way.
- Negative enquiry – ask questions about what you are being teased about e.g. why don't you like big noses?
- Keep pressing Repeat Button – consistent – No, I am sorry, I don't smoke/you are welcome but I am sorry, I don't smoke.
- Self-esteem sessions
- Anger management groups
- Peer mediation and peer resolution systems - counselling

**STRATEGIES:** Victim and Bully/Bullies must be involved in the process. Combined Strategies are needed to succeed. The support and concern of all stakeholders is vital.

### VICTIM LEVEL -

1. Learn to TELL/TALK, to parents and educators about bullying
2. Tell a friend and get their help
3. Talk to guidance counsellor.
4. Phone CHILDLINE 0800 55555
5. Make friends with the bully
6. Ignore the bully, walk away when the bully approaches
7. Stay with 'safe' friends
8. Play in a safe area of the playground, close to adult supervisors or teachers.

### BULLY LEVEL -

1. Get help from a counsellor
2. Write down the reasons, why she is a bully/ you are a bully.
3. Talk to a friend
4. Agree to stop picking on someone for a day and then increase this each week until the bullying stops.
5. Take up an activity such as karate to control the aggression

### PEER LEVEL -

1. Breathing techniques
2. Non punitive way of dealing with bullies – Peer intervention via interview according to set rules. Both parties asked to comment on negative things that are happening to the victim. Problem-solving approach – shared concern and offer ways to help. Rechannel skills and involve both parties in solutions
3. Promote I'm okay / you're okay (Win-Win) – Self-respect and respect for others.
4. Accept Responsibility – in charge of own behaviour
5. Punch Bag to relieve aggression
6. Zero tolerance with fighting / even "play" fighting
7. BULLY BOX – complaint box and questions on coping skills – anonymous complaints if necessary
8. Encourage TELLING/ TALKING – care enough to do something about it whether it affects you personally or not.
9. No collusion by bystanders or 'friends'
10. Role playing 'real life' situations
11. Emphasis group work and co-operation in classroom and beyond.
12. Promote positive social skills, patience and long term commitment

PARENTS LEVEL -

1. **Be aware and stay informed of strategy taken**
2. **Give support**
3. **Build up self-esteem**
4. Parenting workshop (review own parental methods) - FAMSA

**Family Life Centre  
– Grade 5,6 and 7**

STAFF LEVEL -

1. Insist on bully-free classroom and school
2. Learners write own classroom rules – bully-free zone
3. Anti-bullying posters made by learners after discussions
4. Stay informed what is being done in any situation, which has arisen
5. Be extra-observant of victim and bully/bullies (but not draw attention to the situation or comment generally).
6. Promote TELLING/TALKING
7. Bully Awareness Week/ More positive way – Friendship Week
8. Be consistent, fair, and realistic and listen to grievances, however petty or small (small problems became big problems, if not dealt with). Handle 'situations' immediately and/or ask for help. Use positive reinforcement
9. Take note of any changes in behaviour or attitudes; know your learners. Use daily reports, etc for monitoring.
10. Keep evidence (written), may be needed for disciplinary hearing.
11. Follow procedures and line of command
12. Do role play and give tasks that handle conflict resolution e.g.

Session 1 : When have you been bullied by someone? How did you feel? Discuss in a group.

Session 2: When have you bullied someone else? How did you feel? Discuss in a group. Who can help? How? What can you do to help yourself? What can you do to help others? **Are we ostriches or eagles?**

OUTCOMES -

1. Interview "former" bullies – assess progress and monitor
2. Meeting with "victim" and "bullies" - problem solving
3. Concept of tolerance
4. Conflict Resolution Skills to be taught from Grade 0

**Further Definitions on Bullying:**

Bullying is treating someone in a very unpleasant way by using strength or power to hurt or frighten them. (Collins Cobuild English Dictionary)

A student is being bullied or victimised when she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students. (Olweus, D. 1993:9. Bullying at school. What we know and what we can do. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers)

Bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group or persons. (Rigby, K. 1996:15. Bullying in schools and what to do about it. Melbourne: Acer)

Bullying is long-standing violence, physical or psychological, conducted by an individual or a group and directed at an individual who is not able to defend herself in the actual situation. (Roland, E. 1993:16. Understanding and Managing bullying. Oxford: Heineman School Management)

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt another and put her under stress. (Tattum, D. 1993:8. Understanding and Managing bullying. Oxford: Heineman School Management)

Bullying is the use of power by one or more person intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights and needs of another. (Brown, K. 1997:31. Bullying. What can parents do? East Sussex: Monarch)

Bullying is harmful and deliberate behaviour. Bullies have the desire to hurt, frighten, oppress, intimidate and subdue their victims, often for no apparent reason. They also seem to derive some satisfaction from hurting others and witnessing their discomfort and misery.

**Bullying websites:**

<http://www.scre.ac.uk/bully/links.html>

<http://www.nobully.org.nz/default.htm>

<http://www.bullying.co.uk>

<http://education.unisa.edu.au/bullying>

<http://www.antibullying.net>

<http://www.edulaw.co.za/bullying/index.htm>

<http://www.rau.ac.za/cur/bullying/default.htm>