

POLICY: ANTI-BULLYING

POSITION STATEMENT

Blessed Perfect Academy does not tolerate bullying in any form, and all members of the school staff are committed to promoting a safe and caring environment for learners. Staff, learners, and parents will work together to address issues of bullying when these arise.

1. In accordance with the requirement of the South African Schools act (act 84/1996) the board of **Directors** of **Blessed Perfect Academy** project has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's code of conduct.
2. The board recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of learners and is therefore committed to the following key principals of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour.
 - **A positive school culture and climate which:**
 - Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
 - Encourages learners to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - Promotes respectful relationships across the school community
 - Effective leadership
 - A school wide approach
 - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
 - **Implementation of education and prevention strategies including awareness raising measures that:**
 - Build empathy, respect, and resilience in learners; and
 - Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including particular, racial and homophobic bullying
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of learners
 - Support for staff

- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including the use of established intervention strategies); and
- Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

3. In accordance with our code of conduct, bullying is defined as the following

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

Physical aggression

This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in “play fights”, they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Intimidation

Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation, it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language and the voice is often used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

Isolation/Exclusion and other related bullying

This takes place when a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or the entire class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes, or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Related bullying occurs when a person attempts to socialise and form relationships which peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined.

One of the most common forms includes control. “Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore” (implied or stated), a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours about a person or giving the “silent treatment”)



Cyber bullying

This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) such as text, social network sites, email, instant messaging, Apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying.

As cyber bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber bullying. For example; a target may be sent homophobic text message or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Name calling

Persistent name calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance e.g. size or clothes worn, accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provide name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

Damage to personal property

Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, cellular phones or other devices, school books, school bags, or other learning materials. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor or thrown in a waste bin. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen, or hidden.

Extortion

Demands for money and/or any other personal goods may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand) a pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

Isolated or once off incidents of initial negative behaviour, including a once-off hurtful or offensive text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the schools Code of Conduct.

Negative behaviour that does not meet with the definition of bullying behaviour will be dealt with by the schools Code of Conduct.



4. The relevant educators for investigating and dealing with bullying-behaviour are:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Grade</u>

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

The prevention of bullying must be an integral part of the written anti-bullying policy of all primary and high schools. Every school must document in its anti-bullying policy the specific education and prevention strategies that the school will implement. This must include documenting the measures being taken by the school to explicitly address and identify bullying including in particular racial, religious and homophobic bullying.

Effective practice includes prevention and awareness. Raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in learners.

As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, we will provide learners with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth both through our extra-curricular and curricular programmes.

Prevention and awareness raising measures must also deal explicitly with cyber-bullying. The best way to address cyber bullying is to prevent it from happening in the first place. Prevention and awareness raising measures will focus on educating learners on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber bullying. The prevention and awareness measures will also take into account the scope for cyber bullying to occur as a result of access to technology from within the school.

We will raise the awareness of bullying so that all members of the school community understand what bullying is and how the school deals with bullying behaviour.

Educators can influence attitude to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through curricular initiatives in their life orientation lessons. The CAPS curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as inter related areas of belonging and integrating communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.

There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all; to promote value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping to highlight the unacceptability of a bullying behaviour. These lessons will be introduced in subjects like art, drama, dance, and physical education.



6. The school's procedure for investigation follows up and recording of bullying-behaviour and the establishment of intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

The primary aim of the relevant educator in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as practical, the relationship of the parties involved. (Rather than apportion blame)
In investigating and dealing with bullying, the educator will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

All reports, including anonymous reports must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant educator. In that way learners will gain confidence in "telling". This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be "telling tales" but are behaving responsibly.

Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, sport coaches, cleaners, ground staff and bus drivers must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them, to the relevant educator. Parents and learners are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as practical, the relationship of the parties involved as quickly as possible.

It is important that all involved (including each set of parents and educators) understand the above-mentioned process from the outset.

Educators should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by learners, staff or parents.

Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all learners concerned. Learners who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant educator should seek answers to questions of: What? Where? When? Why? This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed; all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;



Each member of the group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from other members of the group after interviews by the educator.

It may be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

In cases where it has been determined by the relevant educator that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by referring to the schools Code of Conduct). The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school.

Where the relevant educator has determined that a learner has engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the schools anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the learner being bullied.

It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of learners and parents) that any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, that this is a private matter between the learner being disciplined, his/her parents and the school. Follow up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date, if the learner who has been bullied is ready and agreeable (these learners might have to spend many years together in the same school environment).

In cases where the relevant educator considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 14 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has taken place, it must be recorded by the educator in the recording # Annexure (A).

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant educator must as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
- Whether any of the issues between the parties have been resolved
- Whether the relationship between the parties have been restored as far as is practical; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school principal or deputy principal

Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has not dealt with bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school complaint's procedure.

In the event that a parent has exhausted the schools' complaints procedure and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a



complaint to the department of education or utilise legislation like the Harassment Act

7. The schools programme of support for working with learners affected by bullying is as follows:

Learners who are bullied may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resiliencies whenever this is needed.

Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the learners' self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Learners who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with educators.

8. Supervision and monitoring of learners

The School Management of **Blessed Perfect Academy** confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

9. Prevention of harassment

The School Management confirms that the school will take all steps that are reasonably practical to prevent the sexual harassment of learners or staff or the harassment of learners or staff on any of the following grounds;
i.e.: Gender, religion, family status, sexual orientation, age, disability or political affiliation, race, or culture

This policy was adopted by the School Management on

This policy has been made available to school personnel and is readily accessible to parents and learners on request.

This policy will be reviewed and updated every year.

Signed _____
School Management

Date: _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date: _____

Signed _____
Educator Representative

Date: _____

