**Diocesan Boys School Primary Division**

# Anti-bullying Policy

2022/12/1

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Aim and Objectives of the Policy

- The Diocesan Boys' School is committed to providing a caring, inclusive, friendly and safe environment for all our students. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in Diocesan Boys' School and the Primary Division. Our whole school programme together with our Christian ethos compels us to do all we can to prevent bullying from occurring. Should bullying still occur, mechanisms are in place so that all students and staff can report that incident which will then be handled promptly and effectively.
- Adopt a "Whole School Approach", engaging teaching staff, students and parents to combat school bullying, albeit on a voluntary basis.
- Outline what teachers will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying.
- Developing an anti-bullying culture where the bullying of adults, children or young people is not tolerated in any form.

Defining Bullying

**What is Bullying**

Academics have generally agreed on the following three major components as the definition of bullying, namely:

1. *Repetition*

- Bullying repeats over time. It is not a single incident.

2. *Malicious intent*

- Bullies oppress and hurt others deliberately.

3. *Imbalance of power*

- Bullies are apparently more powerful and bullying occurs when the victims are unable to defend themselves. (Beane, 1999; DFES, 2002; Newman, Horne & Bartolomucci, 2000; Olweus, 1993)

Bullying is a repeated and intended act of harm or oppression by a person or a group of persons who is more powerful or in the majority. The school will investigate if any of the descriptions above have been reported.

**Types and Forms of Bullying**

Bullying can be broadly classified into four categories as follows:

A. Physical bullying with aggressive behaviour

- Punching, kicking, slapping, hitting, scratching, pushing, shoving, tripping, pulling hair, throwing objects at someone, extorting money or properties, etc.

B. Verbal bullying

- Intimidating, making nasty/abusive calls, cursing, defaming, mockery, name-calling and insulting or making malicious fun of somebody by attacking his personal characteristics like appearance, ability, and ethnicity.

C. Indirect bullying

- Spreading rumors, being hostile, ignoring, isolating, boycotting or rejecting the victim, etc.

D. Cyber-bullying

- With the development of information technology, bullies can spread rumors, post insulting remarks or make other personal attacks via electronic means, such as emails, webpages, chat rooms and text messages on mobile phones, to mock and defame the victims. This gives rise to what we call "cyber-bullying".

E. Sexual bullying

- Unwanted sexually physical contact, inappropriate and uninvited sexual comments, taunts, texts, emails, etc. which are offensive, embarrassing, intimidating or humiliating.

Signs and Indicators of Bullying

If a student begins to exhibit one or more of these symptoms without a reasonable justification, it may indicate he is being bullied. Even though these signs and behaviors might imply other problems, bullying must be considered a possibility and therefore investigations have to be conducted as soon as possible.

A. Behavioral Patterns

- increased irritability and nervousness
- unexplained changes in mood
- increased aggressiveness
- becoming disruptive and unreasonable
- harboring thoughts that they deserve to be bullied
- becoming withdrawn
- excessive tearfulness or sensitivity to criticism
- indulging in substance abuse
- becoming obsessive
- crying themselves to sleep at night and/or having nightmares
- changing their usual routine
- showing attempts to self-harm or run a

B. Physical Manifestations

- chest pains
- pattern(s) of minor illness(es)
- insomnia
- stomach problems
- eating problems
- fatigue and lethargy
- headaches
- sweats
- inconsistent explanations for cuts and bruises
- stammering
- feeling ill in the morning

C. Psychological Conditions

- anger
- anxiety
- distress
- frustration
- depression
- panic
- indifference
- fear
- attempted suicide
- shame and feelings of worthlessness

- a loss of trust in friends and their inability to support and protect

D. Social, Interpersonal and School-Related Behavioral Observations

- anxiety about traveling to and from school
- unwilling to go to school
- beginning to truant
- begging to be driven to school
- changing the route to school
- coming home late from school without any plausible explanation
- coming home with clothes torn
- fear of using the school toilet during breaks
- fear of being without the presence of adults
- fear of using the internet or electronic devices
- anxious about checking emails, messages or texts
- possessions missing or damaged
- changes in eating habits, such as a sudden meal-skipping or binge eating (due to their lunch or money being snatched, hidden, or stolen)
- increased and excessive requests for money
- a loss of interest or concentration in school
- becoming withdrawn in classroom activities
- a lack of creativity, initiative, and/or confidence
- deterioration in school performance and learning motivation
- reluctance to discuss the problem when asked “What’s wrong?”
- beginning to bully small/younger students, siblings, and/or kids, etc.
- unusual concerns about physical appearance, attributes, and/or mannerisms, etc

Whole School Approach on Anti-Bullying Education

The School fosters a clear understanding that bullying is not acceptable and anti-bullying strategies are practicing as:

- Promotion of school code of conduct.
- Good communication between social workers and teachers.
- Regular training for staff
- Talk promoting anti-bullying to students
- Parent information sessions
- Management team keeps communicating with the discipline committee with its evaluation and assessment of the anti -bullying policy's outcome and effectiveness.

Students and parents are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents. Early intervention can always result in a favourable outcome. Parents may refer to Appendix I for the details of how to support your child if he exhibits bullying behaviour or become victims of bullying.

Reporting bullying

Students and parents should seek a teacher they trust or their class teacher if they believe bullying behaviour is being displayed.

Disciplinary Measures towards students that display bullying behavior

As a school, we are working with staff, students and parents to create a school environment where bullying is not tolerated. We have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to the issue of bullying.

The school provides assurance to students that:

- Bullying is not tolerated within the school;
- Their concerns will be taken seriously;

Proper investigation will be carried out including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders without the involvement of parents.

Additional Resources

**Social welfare department 24-hour hotline service**

Phone: 2343 2255

Website: http://www.swd.gov.hk

**Center for restoration of human relationships**

Phone: 2399 7776

Website: https://www.restoration.com.hk

Email: info@restoration.com.hk

**Link for anti-bullying service:**

https://www.restoration.com.hk/service/services6/97187525449220101

## Appendix I

## What parents can do when their children exhibit bullying behaviour or become victims of bullying

Home-school cooperation is the key to handling bullying. The following are some handling tips when your child exhibit bullying behaviour or become victims of bullying.

*If Your Child Has Been / Is Being Bullied*

What should you do when you find your child is being bullied? Apart from listening to your child patiently, finding out what is distressing him. It is also important to contact the school and work in collaboration with the school staff to solve the problem. In order to help your child face the problem, parents may do the following:

1. Stay calm. Avoid blaming the child.
2. Find out from your child what problem / distress he is facing.
3. If your child is not ready to share the problem with you, bear in mind: Avoid pressing your child into telling the issue if he is not ready. Parents should let your child know you are happy to listen when he is ready to share and will solve the issue with him together.
4. If your child takes the initiative to talk to you about a bullying he encounters, praise him for his courage.
5. Listen carefully. Don't respond too fast before you get enough information to understand the whole issue.
6. Help the child understand that reporting to the school can ensure safety of the school and other people.
7. Discuss with your child the causes of the problem.
8. Understand the methods your child has ever used in solving the problem.
9. Think before giving opinions to your child. "Has he ever used these methods?" "Are there any other alternatives?"
10. Help your child find out previously used or workable solutions and encourage him to try the following methods if he is being bullied:
    a. Try to avoid people who have ever bullied / harassed / hurt / attacked him.
    b. Ignore the bullies' words, e.g. pretending not to hear or laugh if off, making the bullies feel snubbed and then they would stop the behaviour.
    c. Seek help from parents / teachers immediately when encountering serious bullying behaviours (e.g. those with violence).
11. Encourage your child to tell the bullying incidents to relevant adults (e.g. class teachers, discipline teachers, social workers, etc.).
12. Parents should contact their class teachers or a teacher they trust, understand the causes as well as the process of bullying and discuss methods to prevent your child and others from being bullied again.
13. Seek professional help. Provide appropriate counselling to your child to minimise the impact of bullying and help him learn how to protect himself.

14. Contact social workers immediately and discuss possible solutions to resume classes in case your child is afraid of going to school due to bullying.

*If Your Child Has Witnessed Bullying*

Many students, who have witnessed bullying, are not willing to talk about or report the bullying incidents to their parents or teachers. They think that intervention in the issue may result in:

1. Being considered as the informer or sneak, becoming a victim of bullying out of revenge.
2. Making the bullying situation worse and unable to help the victims.
3. Being seen as meddlesome, not supported by the majority.

Parents should help your child understand that bullying is indeed very harmful and affects everyone. Silence will only make the problem worse. Parents should help your child build up the tactics and courage in reporting bullying incidents. You have to let him understand that he has the responsibility to assist the school in building a safe learning environment with mutual respect. Parents can prepare your child with the skills and points to note in reporting bullying incidents. Parents should also be aware that in encouraging your child to report bullying incidents, you have to consider how to protect your child's safety. Thus, if necessary, parents should contact the school so that the school can early intervene and discuss the safety measures in protecting your child, who is the informant.

*If Your Child is the Bully*

You play a very important role in resolving the school bullying problem. Both your child and the school need your support for making the school a harmonious place. In order to achieve this, you can:

1. Stay calm and avoid scolding your child.
2. Take the initiative to support the school in resolving the bullying problem. Cooperate with the school to find out the underlying reasons why your child bullies others.
3. Encourage and teach your child to apologize to the victims in order to settle the conflicts, reconcile the resentment, and accept each other.
4. Help your child understand the serious consequences of bullying and the importance of having the courage to change.
5. To prevent bullying behaviours of your child from happening again, parents should:
    a. Help your child understand himself and establish his own self-worth.
    b. Help your child respect the individual differences and accept that every person is unique.
    c. Help your child develop empathy in understanding the feelings of the victims.
    d. Help your child find appropriate ways to express his emotions.
    e. If necessary, seek professional services such as counselling; or psychotherapy, etc.