

# Hillcrest High School



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### 1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

At Hillcrest High School we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our learners so that they can learn in a secure atmosphere that fosters knowledge and promotes respect. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

### 2. 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 for other school rules, the code of conduct, other policies and programmes to ensure a caring, friendly and safe environment for all learners
- to 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, are empowered to report it and act against it
- to assist in creating a climate in which parents and caregivers are informed about bullying, understand the various types of bullying that can occur, are empowered to report it and act against it
- to establish a framework and procedures for dealing consistently and effectively with all cases of bullying

### 3. WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is the act of repeatedly singling out and deliberately hurting or harming a child physically or psychologically. It results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying takes many different forms:

- **Physical bullying** - includes hitting, pushing, slapping or tripping as well as forcibly taking another child's lunch, money or possessions.
- **Verbal bullying** - includes threats, insults, ridiculing, name-calling and making racist or sexual remarks.
- **Non-verbal bullying** - includes writing hurtful messages, letters or graffiti, or distributing pictures and videos that damage a child's reputation.
- **Social bullying** - includes gossiping and spreading rumours.
- **Sexual bullying** - includes passing inappropriate notes, jokes, pictures, taunts and starting rumours of a sexual nature.
- **Cyber bullying** - includes using the internet, mobile phones or other electronic devices to insult, harass, spread rumours, damage reputations and distribute harmful videos and pictures.

#### **4. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ADDRESS BULLYING?**

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

#### **5. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

5.1 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 associate with friends.
- feel a sense of belonging, acceptance and friendship
- be treated politely and with respect by others.
- ask for bullying to stop and ask for help if it does not.

5.2 Every learner has the responsibility to:

- be respectful and friendly to all.
- co-operate with others in school activities.
- report bad behaviour that may constitute bullying.

5.3 Every staff member has the responsibility to:

- treat children with dignity and respect and to help to create a 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 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.
- initiate and steer disciplinary procedures in cases of serious misconduct, in line with the South African Schools Act.

## **6. PROCEDURES**

Class teachers are responsible for dealing with minor or once-off incidents of bullying. More serious incidents should be reported to the Grade Controller/Behaviour Management Officer for further action. Once an incident is reported, the Grade Controller/Behaviour Management Officer should:

- interview separately the learners involved, and witnesses, to establish what actually happened.
- inform both children's parents or caregivers of the incident and
- determine the appropriate intervention and sanctions.
- report the incident to the Deputy Principal or Principal, and
- 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.
- refer serious cases to the Behaviour Management Officer.

## **7. 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 learner. Possible consequences (in no particular order) include:

- requiring the bully 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.