

RONDEBOSCH BOYS' PREPARATORY SCHOOL

POLICY: <u>ANTI-BULLYING POLICY</u>	
POLICY REF. NO. A5/04/2011	DATE: 18 April 2011
<i>(Adopted on 18 April 2011)</i>	

1 MISSION STATEMENT

- 1.1 RBPS adopts a zero tolerance approach to any form of bullying. In so doing, RBPS strives in the first instance to prevent bullying from taking place, to see to it that bullying is immediately brought to an end where it is reported and to deal with incidents of bullying (or alleged bullying) swiftly and fairly with a view to ensuring that it does not re-occur.

2 OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

- 2.1 The objective of this Policy is to:
- 2.1.1 support other school rules, code of conduct, policies and programmes in ensuring a caring, friendly and safe environment for all learners so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere;
 - 2.1.2 create a climate in which learners are informed about issues concerning bullying, understand the various types of bullying that can occur and are empowered to act against it;
 - 2.1.3 assure learners and parents that they will be supported when bullying is reported;
 - 2.1.4 deal with bullying of any kind consistently and effectively with a zero-tolerance approach;
 - 2.1.5 ensure that learners, parents and staff are fully informed of this bullying policy and the procedures contained herein, and to foster a productive partnership in dealing with bullying.

- 2.1.6 make all staff and parents aware of their role in fostering knowledge and attitudes that promote respect, and in discouraging attitudes and practices that contribute to bullying, low self-confidence and esteem.

3 WHAT IS BULLYING?

- 3.1 Bullying is deliberate and ongoing aggressive, unkind or disrespectful behaviour with the intention of hurting, injuring, threatening or disempowering another person to the extent that a person feels that he cannot do anything about it. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying may be perpetrated by an individual or group, who does not stop when asked. Bullying may also be an abuse of power intended to hurt, injure, threaten or frighten another person.
- 3.2 There are various forms of bullying behaviour, which need to be identified so that they are recognizable. Central to any prevention of bullying is knowing where to draw the line between what is acceptable and what is not, especially in relation to behaviours such as horseplay, schoolboy bantering or teasing.
- 3.3 The following are examples of typical bullying behaviours:
 - 3.3.1 Emotional/Psychological: including, tormenting, influencing others to dislike someone, making a fool of someone, trying to dominate someone, constant threatening looks or aggressive posturing. This form of bullying can also include rejection by a group of an individual, rumour spreading or intimidation that is not physical;
 - 3.3.2 Physical: this could include pushing around, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence, taking or damaging someone else's property, acting either one-on-one, or otherwise as a group against an individual;
 - 3.3.3 Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
 - 3.3.4 Sexual: unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments
 - 3.3.5 Homophobic: because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality

- 3.3.6 Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, “tuning”, “dis-ing”, spreading rumours, teasing, foul language, threats, taunts aimed at belittling or humiliating the victim.
- 3.3.7 Cyber: relating to misuse of internet, email, cell phone, misuse of associated technology (e.g. camera & video facilities).
- 3.4 Bullying can also take place when educators bully pupils, and also when groups of pupils gang up against an educator.
- 3.5 Any misuse of power by senior learners on junior learners such as PE or fitness sessions which are not conducted with the prior and full authority of the appropriate educator at RBPS is considered to be a form of bullying. Likewise, any attempt by seniors or prefects to impose order on, or gain compliance from juniors through any physical means or by forcing juniors to face groups of seniors acting in concert with the intention of intimidating or humiliating the junior is by definition an abuse of power, and as such is bullying.

4 WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO RESPOND TO BULLYING?

- 4.1 Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.
- 4.2 Learners need to be empowered so that they know how to deal with bullying. RBPS has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.
- 4.3 RBPS needs to offer assistance to learners who are bullied, as well as discipline the perpetrators of bullying and support them in learning different and appropriate ways of behaving.

5 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POSSIBLE BULLYING

- 5.1 A learner may indicate by actions, signs or behaviour that he is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a learner:

- 5.2 does not want to go to school;
- 5.3 finds excuses for not going to school, such as feeling sick;
- 5.4 is very tense, fearful and unhappy after school;
- 5.5 talks about hating school;
- 5.6 has bruises and/or scratches and/or cuts;
- 5.7 talks about not having any friends;
- 5.8 refuses to tell parent about what happens at school;
- 5.9 suffers from insomnia;
- 5.10 is nervous when another child approaches;
- 5.11 is afraid of meeting new people or trying new things;
- 5.12 becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- 5.13 attempts or threatens suicide or runs away;
- 5.14 begins to do poorly in school work or a sudden drop in marks;
- 5.15 comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen);
- 5.16 becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- 5.17 is bullying other children or siblings;
- 5.18 stops eating;
- 5.19 is frightened to say what's wrong;
- 5.20 gives improbable excuses for any of the above;
- 5.21 is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone;
- 5.22 is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received;
- 5.23 has personal property damaged/stolen.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

6 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Every RBPS learner has the right to:

- 6.1.1 learn, work and play without fear of being hurt or humiliated;
- 6.1.2 feel safe, both emotionally and physically;
- 6.1.3 be happy and free to play with friends;
- 6.1.4 feel a sense of belonging, acceptance and friendship;
- 6.1.5 be included in class and playground activity;
- 6.1.6 be treated politely and with respect by others;
- 6.1.7 learn how to solve conflicts in respectful way; and
- 6.1.8 ask for bullying to stop and ask for help if it does not.

6.2 Every RBPS learner has the responsibility to:

- 6.2.1 be respectful and friendly to others without discrimination;
- 6.2.2 co-operate with others in school activities;
- 6.2.3 participate in the school's procedures when resolving conflicts; and
- 6.2.4 report behaviour that may constitute bullying.

7. RBPS PROCEDURES

7.1 If a learner believes he is being bullied he should:

- 7.1.1 tell the bully to stop (if possible)
- 7.1.2 if this is not effective, ask someone he trusts for help (friend, teacher, parent, school counsellor, HOD Pastoral Care) and
- 7.1.3 report the incident – verbally or in writing (not anonymously) – to a class teacher and/or HOD Pastoral Care and/or Deputy Head (Discipline).

- 7.2 RBPS cannot deal with unreported bullying, therefore learners or parents who know someone who is being bullied, are encouraged to:
- 7.2.1 speak to the person who is being bullied and offer help/support and
 - 7.2.2 report the incident – verbally or in writing - to a class teacher and/or HOD Pastoral Care and/or Deputy Head (Discipline).
- 7.3 While all members of staff at RBPS are committed to preventing bullying and dealing with any incidents firmly and cohesively, those principally involved in handling bullying prevention and procedures are:
- 7.3.1 Deputy Head (Discipline): dealing with serious incidents of bullying and consequences; keeping a record of all reported incidents of bullying;
 - 7.3.2 HOD Pastoral Care: managing the school's proactive approach to combating bullying and empowering learners to deal with bullying behaviour;
 - 7.3.3 Class teachers: dealing with once-off incidents and problematic learner behaviour and relationships;
 - 7.3.4 School counsellor: supporting, training and facilitating change for bullies and victims;
 - 7.3.5 Peer Mediators/monitors: mediating playground incidents so as to prevent escalation and bullying.

8. DEALING WITH DISPUTANTS

- 8.1 For the purposes of this policy, references to the term “bully” shall mean alleged “bully”, until it is established that bullying (in whatever form) has in fact occurred.
- 8.2 The learners involved (or allegedly involved) will be interviewed individually and care will be given to both the victim and the bully. The rights of both the victim and the bully will at all times be protected. The needs of both individuals will be heard, considered and addressed.
- 8.3 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 learner, prior history, extenuating circumstances etc.

- 8.4 Possible actions and consequences (not in sequential order) with regard to the bully are:
 - 8.4.1 apology to victim;
 - 8.4.2 informing of parents;
 - 8.4.3 discussion with parents;
 - 8.4.4 behavioural contract;
 - 8.4.5 written warning;
 - 8.4.6 detention;
 - 8.4.7 referral to school counsellor or therapist;
 - 8.4.8 withdrawal of privileges;
 - 8.4.9 community service;
 - 8.4.10 disciplinary hearing; and
 - 8.4.11 suspension (internal or external).
- 8.5 Assistance will be offered to the victim and may include meeting with parents, referral to the school counsellor (for support and possible skills training), follow-up meetings, monitoring of difficult relationships and additional support as required.
- 8.6 The Deputy Head (Discipline) will keep a record of all bullying incidents reported or referred to him.

9. ADDITIONAL MEASURES AND APPROACHES IN SUPPORT OF THIS POLICY

- 9.1 This policy, in conjunction with the other RBPS rules and policies, aims to prevent as well as remediate bullying; some of the measures in place to support this at RBPS are:
 - 9.1.1 peer mediation programme;
 - 9.1.2 social skills, life skills and assertiveness training in Life Orientation;
 - 9.1.3 bullying information and education in Life Orientation;

- 9.1.4 focus on bullying, respect for diversity and related issues in assemblies;
- 9.1.5 counselling;
- 9.1.6 buddy system;
- 9.1.7 encouragement of an open, “telling” environment;
- 9.1.8 adequate supervision by staff during break-times;
- 9.1.9 separation of playground areas;
- 9.1.10 information for parents via policy and website;
- 9.1.11 teacher awareness and continuous training;
- 9.1.12 inclusion of diversity topics within curriculum on an on-going basis;
- 9.1.13 co-operative learning approach to teaching; and
- 9.1.14 clarity of school rules and policies.

Gary Fisher: Chairman of the RBPS Governing Body

Date: 2011