



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

POLICY

Rustenburg Girls' Junior School (hereinafter referred to as the SCHOOL) is committed to addressing all forms of bullying through this policy and its application to all spheres of the school environment.

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1. REFERENCES

- 1.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
- 1.2 South African Schools' Act 84 of 1996

2. STATEMENT OF INTENT

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that individuals learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our individuals so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Education and awareness is promoted through regular talks, anti-bullying campaigns and curriculum. If bullying does occur, all individuals should be able to identify this behaviour and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

In keeping with the school's rules and Code of Conduct, the SCHOOL is committed to creating an environment in which every individual can develop academically, socially and emotionally.



Attempting to remove all aspects of bullying is an integral part of creating a safe and secure milieu that is conducive to the desired development of each individual. We believe that everyone in our community has a right to enjoy and achieve in an atmosphere that is free from fear. By tackling the issue of bullying, in all its forms, we are encouraging an inclusive environment which celebrates individuality and respects the rights of every member of the school community.

The underpinning philosophy behind the Anti-bullying Policy is that it is restorative and informed by compassion, respect and understanding.

Each and every individual has the right to be in a learning environment that allows them to **feel safe, learn and grow, be respected, be valued, and to be different.**

However, with rights come responsibilities, namely: **to respect oneself, to respect other people and their rights and to value others as individuals.** This involves supporting others and showing compassion and understanding towards them.

These rights and responsibilities should be embraced by staff, parents/guardians and individuals alike. Each individual in the Rustenburg community has the collective responsibility to create a safe, respectful school environment, and to help prevent bullying behaviour.

3. WHY DO WE NEED AN ANTI-BULLYING POLICY?

Persistent bullying can severely inhibit an individual's ability to learn effectively. The negative effects of bullying can have an impact on a person for their entire life.

The SCHOOL wishes to promote a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour. Therefore this policy promotes practices within the SCHOOL to reinforce our vision, and to remove or discourage practices that negate them.

4. BULLYING DEFINITIONS:

For the purposes of this anti-bullying policy, the SCHOOL will define "Bullying" as follows:

Bullying is unwanted behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group which is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated over time, with a continued attempt to exert dominance over another person in a forceful and/or demeaning manner. Bullying can be emotional, physical, racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, verbal or cyber. Once-off incidents, whilst they may be very serious and must always be dealt with, do not fall within the definition of 'bullying'. However, if a pattern of these incidents emerges over time, which is supported by adequate records, it would then be regarded as bullying and dealt with appropriately.

There are various forms of bullying, which include:



4.1 **Physical bullying:** e.g., hitting, kicking or taking belongings.

Any form of repetitive physical behaviour which intentionally harms others or their property. This includes stealing, throwing or intentionally damaging another individual's possessions, as well as extortion e.g., forcing others to hand over their possessions such as lunch or money.

4.2 **Verbal bullying:** e.g., name calling, using insults or making discriminatory remarks.

Any form of repetitive verbal communication which includes name-calling, repeated teasing, insulting and discriminatory remarks, threats and any other form of verbal abuse designed to harm or belittle another individual.

4.3 **Indirect bullying:** e.g. influencing, encouraging or organising others to be involved in any form of repetitive bullying behaviour, spreading malicious rumours, excluding individuals from social groups or bringing family feuds into school.

4.4 **Cyber bullying** e.g. through the media of: cellphones, computers, photographs, videos, email, internet, instant/voice messaging, website, chatrooms.

Any form of repetitive use of e-technology as a means to undertake bullying behaviour or spreading rumours ("innocent" or derogatory) or making malicious comments.

4.5 **Psychological/Emotional and social bullying:**

Any form of repetitive bullying behaviour that includes spreading rumours, non-verbal intimidation (such as glaring or laughing at others with the intention to threaten or shame), excluding someone from the group and preventing others from befriending them, or applying pressure to peer/s to conform.

4.6 **Racist bullying:**

Any form of repetitive bullying behaviour that is motivated by racial, ethnic or cultural prejudice.

4.7 **Sexual bullying:**

Any form of repetitive bullying behaviour that includes unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.

4.8 **Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying:**

Any form of repetitive bullying behaviour that is motivated by a prejudice against LGBTQIA+ individuals.

4.9 **Disablist bullying:**

Any form of repetitive bullying behaviour that is motivated by a prejudice against individuals with any form of disability.

4.10 **Sexist bullying:**

Any form of repetitive bullying behaviour that is motivated by a prejudice against someone because of their sex or gender.



5. ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES AND CONSEQUENCES

- 5.1 If an individual feels that they are a victim of bullying they can report it in one of the following ways:
- 5.1.1 Use the anonymous comment box (located in both phase buildings)
 - 5.1.2 Send an email to the speakout@rgjs.org.za
 - 5.1.3 Report to a peer mediator
 - 5.1.4 Report to a staff member
- 5.2 If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be investigated and dealt with initially and calmly by the staff member concerned, reassuring and supporting individuals appropriately.
- 5.3 The recipient of bullying behaviour will be listened to, believed (until such time as evidence proves to the contrary) and fully supported.
- 5.4 The individual/s undertaking the bullying behaviour, the recipient of the bullying behaviour and the witnesses of such bullying behaviour may be asked to write down an account of what has taken place.
- 5.5 The staff member will record the details of the incident and inform the Deputy Principal.
- 5.6 The Deputy Principal will interview all the parties and make a record.
- 5.7 Staff teaching the recipient of the bullying behaviour and the individual's class teacher and mentor teacher will be informed.
- 5.8 The investigation will include identifying whether or not the bullying is part of a pattern or a once-off incident.
- 5.9 Cases of bullying will be recorded by staff on the records of all the individuals involved so that any pattern can be quickly identified.
- 5.10 Parents/Guardians will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and may be asked to come into the SCHOOL to discuss the incident/s of bullying behaviour.
- 5.11 Any bullying behaviour and threats of bullying must immediately stop. Repetition of any offence will be treated very seriously. The Principal will be involved in any serious occurrence or repetition of bullying behaviour, and should be informed of any instance that causes concern to staff members.
- 5.12 An attempt will be made to help the individual/s undertaking the bullying behaviour change such behaviour. Both the individual/s undertaking the bullying behaviour and the recipient/s of the bullying behaviour, as well as witness/es will be supported. This support may be from the school social worker if needed.
- 5.13 An appropriate behavioural plan may need to be put in place to monitor and help the individual/s undertaking the bullying behaviour to make reparations.



- 5.14 The individual/s undertaking the bullying behaviour will take responsibility for the incident and will offer an apology to the parties involved. Other appropriate consequences may also arise depending on the age of the child and the seriousness of the incident/s.
- 5.15 Whenever possible, the individuals involved will be reconciled.

6. ANTI-BULLYING ADVICE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- 6.1 A great deal of bullying is **cyber-bullying**. Please regularly monitor your child's use of texting and other social media sites. Access to these is out of the SCHOOL's control when your child is not in school.
- 6.2 **Talk** to your child on a regular basis, so any problem is easier to share.
- 6.3 **Listen** to what they say.
- 6.4 **Encourage** your child to feel good about themselves, make them aware that we are all different and equally important. If you believe your child is being bullied, or is undertaking bullying behaviour, talk to other adults at home or at school and explore the options available to them.
- 6.5 **Don't stay silent**. If your child is a recipient of bullying behaviour, assure them that it is not their fault and that you are going to do something to help. Be realistic in your expectations, sometimes on-going problems can take time to resolve.
- 6.6 **Try** to be cooperative with the SCHOOL and not aggressive. Without a good working relationship between parents/guardians and the SCHOOL, the situation could deteriorate.
- 6.7 **Always** remember that children cannot solve bullying on their own. They need the support of parents/guardians and the SCHOOL.

7. PASTORAL CARE

7.1 Recipients of bullying behaviour

Individuals who have been bullied will be given support as determined by the appropriate person, who will be allocated following consultation with the individual and parents.

7.2 The Individual/s undertaking bullying behaviour

Changing the attitude and behaviour of the individual/s undertaking bullying behaviour will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the SCHOOL. The individual/s undertaking bullying behaviour, however, are also in need of support as often their behaviour arises from a need to deflect their own unhappy feelings caused by others or by emotional distress in their lives. The SCHOOL recognises, however, that sanctions will also have to be used against individuals undertaking bullying behaviour.



7.3 Involvement of parents/guardians

Parents/Guardians, as well as all staff and individuals, should know that the SCHOOL will not tolerate bullying, and takes a positive approach to educating individuals to combat it.

Parents/Guardians of individuals who are recipients of bullying behaviour and parents/guardians of the individuals undertaking bullying behaviour will be involved in the solution to the problem as appropriate by the relevant teacher in consultation with the Deputy Principal and Principal.

8. REPORTING, RECORDING AND REVIEW

All incidents must be reported and recorded using the SCHOOL's discipline "Tracking Sheet" and logged on the Staffroom platform. Regular monitoring of the tracking sheet will enable patterns to be identified.

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