



**EFFECTIVE & ADOPTED: 17 APRIL 2024**

**REVIEWED: 24 July 2024**

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY** (further refer to the CHILD PROTECTION & CRISIS MANAGEMENT POLICY)

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated at Country House School. All members of staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both the victim and the bully will be contacted immediately bullying behaviour has been identified. Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, and team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the Designated Teacher within one day of making the complaint, indicating the stage at which the investigation is, and the action that may be taken. The sanctions against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case.

### **FORMS OF BULLYING**

Bullying is defined as offensive behaviour, which is repeated on a number of occasions.

#### **1. PHYSICAL ABUSE**

- hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, shoving, spitting and other instances of direct assault;
- taking, hiding or damaging property that belongs to someone else;
- forcing others to hand over food, money or something which belongs to them;
- coercing a person to do something or engage in any conduct against their will;

#### **2. VERBAL ABUSE**

- name calling and teasing;
- engaging in conduct which is intended to threaten, ridicule or humiliate a person or group of people;
- making fun of a person or group of people because of their appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background;
- making fun of someone's actions or making inappropriate comments;
- spreading rumours;

#### **3. MENTAL ABUSE**

- impairing someone's reputation or relationships;
- intentional exclusion;
- causing children to exclude other children or avoid befriending them;
- spreading rumours or embarrassing information about someone;
- encouraging or inciting taunting and teasing;
- causing a someone to feel socially isolated;
- making rude gestures

#### **4. CYBER BULLYING**

Using the internet and/or mobile devices as a mechanism to taunt, tease, threaten or humiliate a student, whether by the use of images, direct messages, reported messages or comments posted on a media platforms;

#### **5. PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE/ BULLYING (POPIA)**

Peer-on-peer abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control exercised between children, and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships, and wider peer associations. Peer-on-peer abuse can take various forms, including (but not limited to):

- serious bullying (including cyber-bullying),
- relationship abuse, domestic violence and abuse,
- child sexual exploitation,
- youth and serious youth violence,
- harmful sexual behaviour and/or
- prejudice-based violence including, but not limited to, gender-based violence.

Online peer-on-peer abuse is any form of peer-on-peer abuse with a digital element, for example, sexting, online abuse, coercion and exploitation, peer-on-peer grooming, threatening language delivered via online means, the distribution of sexualised content, and harassment.

#### **IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF STUDENTS TO:**

- respect individual differences and diversity and avoid Bullying;
- demonstrate a willingness to correct any Bullying that they might exhibit;
- report bullying instances to their teachers, if they are being bullied or if they see other pupils being bullied, whether at school, online or within the school community;
- assist the Affected Parties who are Bullied, through reporting, peer support and mediation;
- develop a student creed against Bullying which is underpinned by the "Don't Stand By –Stand Up" approach.

#### **WE ENCOURAGE THE BROADER SCHOOL COMMUNITY TO SHARE RESPONSIBILITY WITH THE SCHOOL AND THEREFORE IT IS THE PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY TO:**

- watch for signs that their child may be Bullied;
- watch for signs that their child may display Bullying behaviour;
- address any issues they may have to the Principal or School Heads if their child is being bullied, or they suspect that this is happening;
- encourage their children to "tell" / "report" if they are bullied, as we adopt the "Don't Stand By – Stand Up" approach;
- encourage their children to act appropriately with care and courtesy to everyone who differs from them in any way;
- model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept all individuals within the school community;
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of Bullying when they occur;
- support the schools anti Bullying policy through words and actions; and
- promote prosocial, diversity, integration and responsible behaviour.

#### **PURPOSES**

It is in the interest of all members of the school community that relationships between staff and pupils, staff and staff and pupil and pupil are conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The aim is to create an ethos within the school, which makes bullying unacceptable. An atmosphere of mutual respect should be developed, and, where bullying occurs, it will be addressed immediately and effectively.

## **GUIDELINES**

The school:

- Encourages pupils and parents to report bullying in any form.
- Expects teachers to listen; to act appropriately; to record incidents accurately, and, if necessary, to refer to the Vice-Principal / Designated Teacher / Principal.
- Makes pupils, parents and staff aware of the procedures for dealing with bullying.
- Involves the whole staff, including non-teaching staff.
- Makes all pupils and parents aware of the policy of 'Zero Tolerance' towards bullying.
- Has in place pro-active strategies and preventative responses regarding bullying.

## **METHODS (IN CONJUNCTION TO OUR GREIVENCE AND PROCEDURE POLICY)**

1. **BULLY BOX:** Located at a secure and discreet location, this box is routinely monitored and checked to ensure the confidentiality and effectiveness of the reporting process. Students are strongly encouraged to utilize the Bully Box to report any instances of bullying. This proactive approach enables us to address and manage such situations internally, effectively preventing further incidents and escalation. Rest assured that if our team deems a matter to be serious, it will be reported through the appropriate channels for prompt and appropriate action. Your cooperation in maintaining a safe and respectful environment for all students is greatly appreciated.

## **PROCEDURES**

- Teachers should interview the parties involved, to ascertain the precise nature of the problem.
- A description of the incident(s) and action taken should be recorded on a Record of Concern (Bullying) form and copies given to the relevant teachers. It is essential to keep all written records of such incidents.
- If the incident cannot be resolved simply, some of the following procedures should be implemented:
  1. The victim and / or the perpetrator of bullying should be referred to the Vice-Principal, the Principal or the Designated Teacher.
  2. Parents should be invited to school for interview, accompanied by an interpreter if necessary.
  3. The situation should be regularly monitored to make sure that there is no recurrence of the bullying.
  4. The perpetrator of bullying may be separated from peers, or, in more serious cases, be suspended.

## **PRESCRIBED LEVELS FOR VARIOUS ACTS OF BULLYING/ PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE: GUIDELINES**

The levels set out below are to be used as a guideline. Nevertheless, the Heads must use their discretion in order to assess the severity of an incident.

It is important to note that the prescribed levels and the forms of Bullying therein are not intended to act as an exhaustive list but rather as an indication of the type of severity of an infringement in general.

More importantly, one should recognise that apart from physical Bullying described below, Bullying may be perpetuated via the internet or social media platforms and includes all forms of antisocial behaviour including gender or racially based actions.

In general terms, Level One and Level Two Bullying is non-violent. Level Three Bullying entails physical violence, serious misconduct or repetitive Bullying after a warning or a remedial sanction has previously been given and/or imposed for any other instance of Bullying.

<b>LEVEL 1</b>	<b>CONSEQUENCES TO INCLUDE SOME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated intentional exclusion;</li> <li>• Repeatedly causing someone to feel socially isolated; whether in person or on social media;</li> <li>• Repeated name-calling or making rude gestures;</li> <li>• Repeated threats of violence; whether in person or on social media;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter of warning outlining the nature of offence, signed by parents and placed on file.</li> <li>• Internal suspension (Maximum 3 days)</li> <li>• Internal Counselling</li> </ul>
<b>LEVEL 2</b>	<b>CONSEQUENCES TO INCLUDE SOME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated Level One infringements;</li> <li>• Coercing a person to do something or engage in any conduct against their will;</li> <li>• Making inappropriate comments, taunting or teasing,</li> <li>• spreading rumours or embarrassing information about someone or impairing someone's reputation or relationships, or causing children to exclude others or avoid befriending them; whether in person or on social media;</li> <li>• Forcing others to hand over food, money or something which belongs to them, or taking, hiding or damaging property that belongs to someone else;</li> <li>• Making fun of, threatening, ridiculing or humiliating a person or group of people, whether on the basis of their appearance, physical characteristics, cultural background or otherwise whether in person or on social media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciplinary enquiry to be chaired by a member of the School SGB</li> <li>• Further letter of warning, again placed on file and signed by parents.</li> <li>• External suspension (Maximum 3 days)</li> <li>• External counselling</li> <li>• Community service (6 hours)</li> </ul>
<b>LEVEL 3</b>	<b>CONSEQUENCES TO INCLUDE SOME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated Level Two infringements</li> <li>• Physical assaults, including hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, shoving and spitting;</li> <li>• Any form of impersonation, identity theft and/or identity fraud whether in person or online;</li> <li>• Any act qualifying as a sexual offence under the Sexual Offences Act;</li> <li>• Any act for which the student could receive criminal charges in the ordinary course.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciplinary enquiry to be chaired by a member of the School SGB</li> <li>• Letter of Final warning.</li> <li>• External suspension (Maximum 5 days)</li> <li>• External counselling</li> <li>• Community service (24 hours)</li> <li>• A second Level 3 infringement will lead to permanent exclusion</li> </ul>

## PARAMOUNT

All Students and their parents are requested to read this policy and acknowledge their agreement to abide by the spirit and terms of this policy as part of the general code of conduct of the school is a fundamental condition for acceptance into the school, for continued attendance and for participation in all its programmes and activities.

### APPROVED

SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE	<i>Bonita Mellom</i>	DATE	26 August 2025
SGB REPRESENTATIVE	<i>Anneska De Villiers</i>	DATE	26 August 2025