



St Andrew's School
for Girls

BULLYING POLICY

VERSION 1.1

Our aim is to promote in our school community, an atmosphere and ethos of caring, concern and acceptance. We want our children to learn in and experience an environment where everyone feels valued and safe and where individual differences are appreciated and accepted. The school therefore needs to create an awareness of the need for respect and empathy for others, and of what bullying is, its deleterious effects on others and how to deal with such incidents. Staff, girls and parents also need to be made aware of what recourse there is in terms of dealing with any incidents of bullying in the school environment, to ensure each girl's right to enjoy her time at school.

1. JURISDICTION OF CODE OF CONDUCT

This code of conduct extends to all students during school hours and during any bona fide school events.

2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

2.1 Girls are involved in hundreds of social interactions in any typical school day and it is unrealistic to believe that all of these can be positive. These interactions are impacted on by personalities, values, personal needs and issues, and the context in which the interaction occurs, as well as the history of that context. All of these impact on the interpretation of the event as an incident of bullying and how one deals with it. However, our understanding of bullying is as follows:

2.1.1 any behaviour which is intended to hurt, injure, threaten or frighten another person.

2.1.2 behaviour which leaves a child feeling uncomfortable and/or powerless to deal with it effectively.

2.1.3 behaviour that is a misuse of power or creates an imbalance of power.

2.2 The following broad areas where this bullying behaviour manifests include:

2.2.1 physical bullying, for example forcing others to do things they do not want to do, damaging property, or any uninvited aggressive actions.

2.2.2 verbal bullying which may include insulting family members, writing nasty letters about someone or uninvited aggressive statements or verbal threats.

2.2.3 psychological bullying which may include spreading nasty rumours, telling others not to associate with someone and creating an imbalance where a group intimidates or isolates one person.

- 2.2.4 sexual bullying where denigrating sexual comments are made or where someone is embarrassed by being shown pornography or is shown pornographic materials against their will.
- 2.2.5 discriminatory bullying, for example comments or exclusion on the basis of a child's race, religion or sexual inclinations.
- 2.2.6 technological bullying, where communications technology such as cell phones and computers etc are used to perform any of the above types of bullying e.g. sms, mms, e-mail.

3. DRAFTING OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Various sectors of our school community were involved in the establishment of this code of conduct. The committee that was established from these various sectors consisted of representative teachers and parents from various grades across the school, as well as the Head Girl of the school.

4. PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT:

The practical application of the code of conduct is defined in terms of a preventive/educative component and the procedural component in the event of bullying.

5. PREVENTIVE COMPONENT

The school has defined its implementation of programmes in each of the three schools in order to maintain and develop the ethos of the school. The methods of implementation are reviewed regularly and a current overview of the programmes run with the students available on request. Information regarding workshops or written materials relevant to this topic will be shared with parents from time to time.

6. PROCEDURAL COMPONENT

- 6.1 Incidents of bullying should be reported to teachers via three channels of communication; namely parents, children or other staff. .

- 6.2 The philosophy of any intervention will involve immediate investigation by the teacher. The relevant housemistress in the Senior School and class teacher in the pre-primary and junior schools, will be notified and may intervene if necessary. A policy of no blame will be followed. The parents of the child/children involved will be notified of the situation.
- 6.3 If necessary, after an investigation by the Housemistress or class teacher, the Deputy Head of student affairs in the senior school, or a member of the school's management team, or the Headmistress in the pre-primary and junior schools, will decide on the most appropriate form of intervention and will feed back to the person who referred the matter. A written record of the incident will be kept.
- 6.4 If any party is not satisfied with the outcome of any process that has followed the above channels, they have the right and responsibility to refer the matter to the Headmistress.
- 6.5 If deemed necessary by the school, or if a pupil has been counselled and continues to bully others, she will be disciplined by following the disciplinary procedures as outlined in the Acceptable Conduct Policy, or in a manner deemed appropriate by the pastoral care counsellor or the school's psychologist.
- 6.6 Information regarding the educative procedures and activities used by the school, as well as guidelines for parents and staff for dealing with bullying are available on request.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

The confidentiality of all persons involved will be safeguarded at all times and the number of people receiving information will be kept to a minimum by staff involved in any intervention. Information will only be shared if, in the opinion of the staff member, it is in the interests of the student, if it is to the benefit of the student, or if permission has been granted by the student in this regard.