



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

This school is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles that we work and live by. All members of the school community have the right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

Bergvliet Primary School's mission statement on anti-bullying

Bergvliet Primary School is committed to fostering an environment where its staff, learners and visitors have the right to be free from bullying, harassment and victimization. This school recognizes that such behaviour is unacceptable and, if based on a person's race, sex, disability, religion or sexual orientation, is unlawful. The staff of Bergvliet Primary School has a legal obligation to provide a safe place for work. Any bullying, harassment or victimization that is reported will be investigated in order to comply with this obligation. This obligation cannot be derogated.

Bergvliet Primary School anti-bullying principles

- All staff, learners and visitors are responsible for helping to ensure that individuals do not suffer bullying, harassment or victimization in any form.
- It is against the schools policy and will not be tolerated
- A learner has the right to seek assistance as soon as he/she feels threatened.
- If subjected to bullying, harassment or victimization, a learner should approach an educator or parent to seek assistance or advice.

Conflict versus bullying

Conflict is a disagreement or a difference of opinion or interests between equals. Those involved in a conflict may disagree and emotions may run high. In conflict, both parties have power to influence the situation and that is their goal. Conflict may be an inevitable part of group dynamics, but bullying is not. In each a different response is required.

Characteristics of a bullying situation include:

- An imbalance of power
- The intent to harm
- Worsens with repetition over time
- The distress of the child being bullied, often include fear or terror
- Enjoyment of the effects on the child being bullied by the person doing the bullying
- The threat – implicit or explicit – of further aggression.

Definition of bullying:

Bullying is the inappropriate use of power by an individual or group, with the intent to injure either physically or emotionally i.e physical or psychological (verbal or non-verbal). It is usually deliberate and repetitive.

Forms of bullying include:

- Physical violence such as hitting, pushing, punching, kicking or any other action that causes hurt or injury.
- Interfering with another person's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it.
- Using offensive names, verbal threats, or verbal insults when addressing another learner or staff member.
- Teasing or spreading rumours about another learner or his/her family.
- Belittling another learner's abilities and achievements.
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another learner.
- Excluding another learner from a group activity.
- Ridiculing another learner's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.
- Misusing technology (internet or cellular phones) to hurt or humiliate another person.

Procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

Any form of bullying, harassment or victimization is a disciplinary offence. All incidents will be taken seriously and provide grounds for informal or formal disciplinary action. Notes will be kept on file and will be taken into account during disciplinary procedures. If the bullying, harassment or victimization cannot be resolved by an informal procedure, a formal procedure may then follow.

Steps will be taken to support and respond to the needs of both bullied and bullying learners. The school will follow up on any report discreetly and will undertake an appropriate investigation by a panel. A panel will gather information from the individual's concerned and /or relevant people and will make a decision on the basis of the information collected. The panel will follow up and undertake an appropriate investigation.

The panel will consist of the principal and or deputy principal, learners educator, school social worker, parents and members of the Governing Body (as needed) who are available to talk to learners in confidence.

If the investigation concludes that, on the balance of probabilities, the complaint is substantiated and is sufficiently serious to warrant it, there will be a recommendation that agreed disciplinary procedures and counselling be invoked at the appropriate level.

The formal procedure will state clearly, in writing, what the procedure for a particular offence involves and what the possible outcomes will be. Rights of appeal for both parties should also be made clear.

If it is deemed that the safety of an individual(s) is at risk of serious harm, confidentiality in these circumstances may override any legal obligations to disclose.

The making of false or malicious complaints of bullying, harassment or victimization will be regarded as a serious disciplinary offence.

Counselling and support for learners and parents will be made available through the school social worker as required.

Preventative measures:

Bergvliet Primary School constantly implements other measures to promote positive behaviour i.e. Peer mediation programme, Buddy programme, ongoing education with in the classroom to promote mutual respect.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:

- Foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
- Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to class educator, school counsellor or principal
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.

- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Advising their children to report any bullying to (name of a member of staff/specific post in school/their class teacher) and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying

Conclusion:

Bergvliet Primary Schools staff has a responsibility, of which they are aware, for eliminating any form of bullying, victimization or harassment. Those in position of authority or trust should be careful that this power is not misused. All individuals will be held personally accountable for their actions, lack of actions and behaviour in cases of bullying, harassment or victimization.

Governing Body Chairperson: _____

Principal: _____

Date: _____

Review date: 2013

Governing Body Chairperson: _____

Principal: _____

Date: _____

Review date: 2015