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Wadeley Academy

OPERATIONAL STANDARD/POLICY

Anti-Bullying


	NAME	POSITION	SIGNATURE	DATE
AUTHOR:	G Petzer	Consultant		
RECOMMENDED BY:	C Wadeley	Principal		
REVIEWED BY:		Deputy Principal		
REVIEWED BY:		Teacher		
APPROVED BY:	Gregory Petzer	Director		
APPROVED BY:	C Wadeley	Director		

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1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define the Anti-Bullying Policy for WADELEY ACADEMY.

2 Scope

This procedure applies to all WADELEY ACADEMY staff and students

3 Definitions, Acronyms and Abbreviations


Bullying is a social problem and instances of bullying occur in all areas of human endeavor involving interpersonal relationships.

Bullying can be physical, verbal, psychological or social. Bullying is characterized by an imbalance of power where one person desires to humiliate another. The bullying action is typically repeated and gives evident pleasure to the bullying person, leaving the bullied person with a sense of having been oppressed.

Abbreviation	Explanation
WADELEY ACADEMY	Wadeley Academy
PR	Principal
VPR	Vice Principal
CT	Class Teacher
P/S	Policy/Standard

4 Responsible for Implementation

HM, VHM and CT

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5 Policy

The role of the school is to provide an appropriate education for all its pupils. A stable, secure learning environment is an essential requirement to achieve this goal. Bullying, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education.

Bullying can have short- and long-term effects on the physical and mental well-being of pupils, on engagement with school, on self-confidence and on the ability to pursue ambitions and interests.

School based bullying can be positively and firmly addressed through a range of school-based measures and strategies through which all those involved with the school are enabled to act effectively in dealing with this behavior.

While it is recognized that home and social factors play a massive role both in the cause and in the prevention of bullying, the role of the school in preventing bullying is crucial and should not be underestimated. School based initiatives can either reinforce positive efforts or help counteract unsuccessful attempts by parents to change unacceptable behavior. Parents and pupils have a particularly important role and responsibility in helping the school prevent and address school-based bullying and to deal with any negative impact that may arise.

It is crucial important that a school policy is implemented that outlines the school's approach to preventing and teaching about bullying. An anti-bullying policy, when developed and implemented across the school community can be the cornerstone in countering bullying behavior.


5.1 Types of Bullying

Physical: This behavior includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in "play fights", they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment of inflicting pain.

Verbal: Diminishing the dignity of another person using verbal attacks such as threats, taunting, mockery, "dissing", racial slurs and hate speech, foul language and name calling. This bullying is sometimes disguised as a joke.

Psychological: Intimidation, manipulation, domination, power play and the use of body language or any other action which psychologically diminishes the dignity of another person.

Social: Rumor mongering, ostracizing, abuse of authority, circulating hurtful or damaging things about another person.

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Cyber Bullying: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) such as text, social network sites, email, instant messaging, Apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies.

5.2 Impact of Bullying

Pupils who are bullied may develop feelings of insecurity, humiliation and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with the consistent lowering of self-esteem.


While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behavior. Extreme cases of bullying may result in suicide. It is therefore essential to be alert to changes in behavior as early intervention is critical to addressing the core issues.

Pupils who witness bullying may also be affected and may suffer in similar ways to those who are bullied. For example, pupils who witness identity-based bullying (weight issues etc.) and share that identity can experience anxiety and feel under threat themselves. Pupils can also feel guilt or distress at not being able to help the person being bullied.

There are consequences for individuals who engage in bullying behavior. Pupils who become involved in such behavior can be at a higher risk of depression. Other possible long-term consequences may include increased risk of developing an anti-social personality, anxiety disorders, a likelihood of substance abuse and law-breaking behavior in adulthood and decreased educational and career attainment.

The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect a child from school. Avoiding regular times for arrival and departure before and after school.
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school
- Pattern of physical illness e.g. headaches, stomach aches, psychosomatic symptoms
- Unexplained changes in either mood or behavior which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or especially after longer school holiday
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting
- Spontaneous out of character comments about either pupils or educators
- Possessions missing or damaged

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- Increased requests for money or stealing money
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her
- Reluctance to leave the classroom during break times

There may be other signs depending on the individual and his/her circumstances. The above signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

5.3 Children have particular rights

All people, according to the South African Constitution, have certain rights and responsibilities: the right to human dignity and the responsibility to respect the dignity of other people; the right to be respected by other people and the responsibility to show respect to others; the right to be valued as individuals and the responsibility to value others as individuals.


Children have the right to a safe learning environment and the responsibility to ensure that their behavior respects the rights of other children to have a safe learning environment; the right to an education and the responsibility to allow un-interrupted learning to take place.

The school is therefore opposed to any member of the community, who puts another person's basic rights in jeopardy, and which constitutes any form of bullying. This would apply particularly to parents who, in defending their own child, reprimand another child on the school property.

5.4 The schools approach

Positive school culture and climate

- A cornerstone in the prevention of bullying is a positive school culture and climate that is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity and respect. A school policy on bullying is most effective when supported by a positive school environment which encourages respect, trust, care, consideration and support for others.
- Central to a positive school culture is respectful relationships across the entire school. This encompasses relationships amongst peers (e.g. learner to learner, educator to educator) and relationships between groups (e.g. educators and learners, parent and educators etc.).
- The misconception that bullying is a normal phase of development and that it teaches learners to toughen up needs to be challenged. It is crucial that an environment is created where learners feel comfortable and free to discuss and disclose incidents of bullying.
- We encourage open dialogue between all school staff and learners and provide the appropriate opportunities for learners to raise their concerns in an environment that is comfortable. This

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dialogue should encompass issues that happen outside school, including cyber bullying.


Below are the key elements in maintaining a positive culture:

Effective Leadership

- Supporting a school culture and climate that celebrates difference and diversity.
- The role of all those in leadership positions within the school is of great importance in stimulating a school-wide approach to preventing and tackling bullying.
- The principal has a key role in dealing with bullying behavior in school because he/she is in a position to influence attitudes and set standards in dealing with such behavior. Principals and other leaders in the school, including all educators, should strive to engage an ethos under which bullying is unacceptable.
- All those who are identified as leaders within the school community can ensure that practical steps are taken to challenge and respond to bullying.
- School leaders should also involve both staff and pupils in developing and implementing a vision of the school where diversity is accepted and celebrated.
- As pupils model their behavior on that of adults, principals and educators have to be careful to act as good role models and not misuse their authority. Moreover, they should be fair, firm, clear and consistent in their disciplinary measures.

A School-Wide Approach

- A school-wide approach (involving school management, staff, parents and learners) to deal with the problem of bullying behavior is an element of effective practice. Bullying behavior affects not only those immediately involved. It can affect everyone in the classroom, in the school and even in the direct community.
- In addition to the role of management and staff, the parents and learners have a role and responsibility in helping the school to prevent and address school-based bullying and to deal with any negative impact. Parents should also recognize that a school that openly discusses bullying is acting positively and that they need to work with their school to ensure there is a school-wide approach to tackling the issue.
- Bullying behavior thrives in an atmosphere of uncertainty and secrecy in which the pupil often feels a sense of hopelessness and futility against the power being exercised by the person engaged in bullying behavior. A high degree of school-wide vigilance and openness is important in ensuring that bullying behavior can be adequately tackled.
- The establishment of community links is important in regard to countering bullying behavior and should be encouraged as a normal part of the school's effective operation for example, bullying behavior can occur on a journey to and/from school. An anti-bullying school policy embraces, as appropriate; those members of the wider community who come directly in daily contact with

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school pupils. Taxi drivers, school bus drivers, the management of your local shopping mall could be encouraged to play a positive role in assisting schools to counter bullying by reporting such behavior to parents and/or to the school as appropriate. Through such approaches, a network is formed.

Shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact


It is important to ensure that all relevant members of the school community have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behavior. The manner in which a school will develop and communicate this shared understanding amongst its learners will depend on factors such as age and maturity of the learners concerned.

Effective Supervision and monitoring of learners

- It is the responsibility of school management in conjunction with staff and learners to develop a system, under which good supervisory and monitoring measures are in place, both to prevent and to deal with bullying behavior.
- Good supervision and monitoring systems also facilitate early intervention; such measures might include appropriate supervision of school activities on a rotation basis. The identification of “trouble spots” and “problem times” can be very beneficial in preventing and dealing with bullying at school.
- All learners and in particular senior learners (prefects/executives) can be seen as a resource to assist in countering bullying.
- Non-teaching staff (cleaners, ground staff etc.) should also contribute to be part of the process to counter bullying behavior in schools. In addition, strategies and measures to be developed to involve all parents.
- The schools anti-bullying policy must confirm that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to prevent any deal with bullying behavior.

Support for Staff


- School management must ensure that members of staff have sufficient familiarity with the schools anti-bullying policy to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy when required. Support for staff should be appropriate to the individual’s roles and should enable staff to recognize bullying, implement effective strategies for preventing bullying and where appropriate in intervening effectively in bullying cases.
- Management must also make the appropriate arrangements to ensure that temporary and substitute staff has sufficient awareness of the school’s code of conduct and its anti-bullying policy.

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5.5 Procedure to deal with Bullying

Bullying will not be tolerated in any section of the school and the below guideline will be used to deal with bullying at WADELEY ACADEMY:

- The primary aim of the relevant educator in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as practical, the relationship of the parties involved. (Rather than apportion blame)
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the educator will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant educator. In that way learners will gain confidence in reporting. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be doing wrong, but instead are considered to be behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, sport coaches, cleaners, ground staff and bus drivers must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behavior witnessed by them or mentioned to them, to the relevant educator.
- Parents and learners are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as practice, the relationship of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- It is important that all involved (including each set of parents and educators) understand the above-mentioned process from the outset.
- Educators should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behavior reported by learners, staff or parents.
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all learners concerned. Learners who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When analyzing incidents of bullying behavior, the relevant educator should seek answers to questions of: What? Where? When? Why? This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed; all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of the group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from other members of the group after interviews by the educator.
- It may be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the

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incident(s).

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant educator that bullying behavior has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by referring to the schools Code of Conduct).
- The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school.
- Where the relevant educator has determined that a learner has engaged in bullying behavior, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the schools anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the learner being bullied.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of learners and parents) that any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, that this is a private matter between the learner being disciplined, his/her parents and the school.
- Follow up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date, if the learner who has been bullied is ready and agreeable (these learners might have to spend many years together in the same school environment).
- In cases where the relevant educator considers that the bullying behavior has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 14 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behavior has taken place, it must be recorded by the educator and submitted to the Principal.
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant educator must as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - Whether the bullying behavior has ceased
 - Whether any of the issues between the parties have been resolved
 - Whether the relationship between the parties have been restored as far as is practical; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school principal or deputy principal

6 Deviations or Contraventions

Any staff or students that do not comply with this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.