# RESTORATIVE PRACTICE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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ST. ANDREW’S GRAMMAR
Anti-bullying Policy

This document is an extension of the existing St. Andrew’s Grammar Behavioural Management Policy. It focuses on the bullying aspect of behaviour and does not replace the current policy.

Anti-bullying Policy Statement

St. Andrew’s Grammar is committed to providing a safe and caring environment which fosters respect for others and does not tolerate bullying.

“THIS IS A BULLY FREE ZONE”

1. AIM

The aim of this policy on bullying is to ensure that every member of our school community has the right to feel safe and secure at St. Andrew’s Grammar.

2. BULLYING POLICY RATIONALE

The mental health and happiness of our children and what they can become as adults depends very much on how they learn to relate to each other in their school life. The family environment is very important in this regard, but it is at school that children learn, or fail to learn, how to enjoy or endure a wide variety of different types of people. This has consequences not only for their own happiness or unhappiness as children but also for their confidence and ability to work and play with others for the rest of their lives.

It is acknowledged that we cannot ensure that children always make the best choices in their friendships at school or enjoy being with the children with whom they mix. However we can do a great deal to prevent situations developing at school which leave some children miserable and defeated as a result of bigger or more powerful individuals or groups continually bullying them.

3. ST. ANDREW’S GRAMMAR CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Rights
All members of the School Community have a right to:
• be treated with respect, courtesy and honesty;
• work and socialise in a safe and supportive environment;
• work in a purposeful and non-disruptive environment;
• be proud of their School.
Responsibilities
All members of the School Community have the responsibility to:
• model respectful, courteous and honest behaviour;
• treat St. Andrew’s as a community where all individuals can freely express their own opinions, beliefs and values in an ethical manner;
• ensure that their behaviour is not disruptive to others;
• keep the School environment neat, clean and safe;
• behave responsibly.

4. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is the repeated and ongoing repression, harassment or victimisation which may occur in three major forms: verbal, physical, or indirect.

Verbal: the child is called names, threatened or put down

Physical: the child is struck, tripped, poked, kicked or intentionally physically hurt in any way; has his/her belongings interfered with in any way

Indirect: - spreading nasty stories and rumours, excluding and isolating, gestures and signs, threatening others to act in a particular way.

Cyber bullying is a new form of indirect bullying and can include sending malicious emails, photos or text messages through the use of computers, mobile phones or cameras.

The typical model of bullying consists of a less powerful individual who may be smaller or weaker being repressed, harassed or victimised by:
• a stronger or more powerful individual, or
• by a group who find strength in numbers.

Bullying is a serious matter. It is not a normal part of human development and is not a part of any “toughening process” that every child must go through. It can cause serious harm to a child, both physically and emotionally, where the psychological scars may remain with them forever.

Bullying is a common occurrence in every country and every school in the world. Bullying is a very serious problem due to its high incidence and the effect it has on the learning and mental health of the victims, bullies and those who are witnesses. For this reason, bullying should never be ignored and should always be acknowledged and treated promptly and directly.

Bullying is different from the common teasing, rough and tumble or school yard fights. What makes a difference is that the incidents are ongoing, and there is usually an imbalance of size, strength and power between the persons involved.

The bully may have power not only because he or she is bigger and stronger but because other children side with the bully, often to protect themselves.
It should be emphasised that although we use the terms bully, victim, repression, harassment, victimisation, sexist and racist in this policy, it is recommended that in real life situation one refrains as much as possible from the use of these labels when dealing with the problem. Research shows that labelling totalises people and makes it more difficult for people to behave differently from their label, or be seen as more than their label.

St. Andrew’s Grammar uses a restorative practice model when dealing with bullying. This means that we have shifted from a more punitive approach to a more collaborative and supportive approach towards the victim and the perpetrator consequently restoring their relationships, respect, self esteem and confidence.

The School endeavours to have a whole school approach, where all members, staff students and parents are involved in making the classroom and playground a bully free zone.

4.1 CYBER BULLYING

Definition of Cyber Bullying
“Cyber bullying uses information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour, by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others.”(Bill Belsey 2007 www.bullying.org)

Children can cyberbully each other in a number of ways including:

- abusive texts and emails
- hurtful messages, images or videos
- imitating others online
- excluding others online
- hurtful online gossip and chat
- inappropriate image tagging

How Teachers Can Help

Research shows students often don’t tell adults about cyberbullying. They often fear they will be disconnected from supportive friends and family and may overreact and make the situation worse. There are some signs you might be able to pick up at school that indicate a child may be the target of cyberbullying or struggling for other reasons. Look for:

- changes in personality, e.g. more withdrawn, anxious, sad or angry, tears
- appearing more lonely or distressed
- unexpected changes in friendship groups
- less interaction with students at school
- possible peer rejection
- decline in school work
- excessive sleepiness or lack of focus
- higher levels of absenteeism
- increased negative self-perception
- a decline in physical health
Parent involvement

• Need to be aware of their child’s computer activities
• Open minded approach to their problems
• Taking the technology away is not the solution (children may not tell their parents that they are being cyber bullied because they are afraid of being taken offline)
• Ensure that the computer is kept in a communal area
• Learn more about technology (computers, internet, filters and privacy settings)
• Encourage them to follow basic online safety rules (e.g. never give their passwords to others)

4.2 WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF BULLYING?

All forms of bullying are often very hard to see. Victims may be already having trouble getting on with other children or with staff. They are often picked on for this reason. Bullying usually happens out of sight, away from teachers or other adults. The people who are most likely to know what is going on are other children. Children who are being bullied often do not like to tell anyone because they feel weak; or ashamed or are frightened that it will only make things worse. They also feel it is wrong to "dob". If they tell anyone it will usually be their mother or their friends before they will tell a teacher.

Staff members, parents and bystanders (students) have to be vigilant of certain behaviours and signs which might indicate bullying.

• Signs staff members can look for:
  - frequently treated in a negative way
  - they are physically assaulted
  - their clothing in a bad condition
  - personal things are destroyed or lost
  - stomach cramps and pains on other parts of their body with no reason
  - depressed or unhappy without being able to explain why
  - they lose focus on school work, unfinished homework
  - socially excluded without having any friends
  - not involved in group games
  - feel secure by staying close to teachers and adults while in the playground
  - afraid of taking up leadership roles or supporting their opinion among students in class

• Signs parents can look for:
  - their children seem unhappy, worried and distressed, in tears
  - not interested at school
  - they come back from school with their clothes being torn apart and their belongings are missing
  - not social and they do not have friends from school
  - they are rarely invited to student parties, do not have anyone to go with to school functions, they do not want to invite anyone from school at their house
  - they often find excuses for not going to school
  - they always need someone to accompany them on their way to school
  - they do not get enough rest during the night because of nightmares
  - they lose their temper easily
  - they always ask for money or they steal money form family members/relatives (in order to get rid of bullies)
  - they might not have physical strength comparing with other students
- suddenly want to become stronger or want to learn about martial arts and other fighting techniques
- have low self esteem and are afraid of playing sports and getting involved with other physical activities
- they can communicate easier with adults than with friends or students
- they make friends from younger age groups

- **Signs bystanders (students) can look for:**
  - victims are hurt physically and emotionally
  - are called with unwanted names and nicknames
  - they receive malicious notes for themselves or for members of their family
  - they are threatened
  - their possessions are stolen, hidden or broken
  - they are excluded from certain groups
  - they are ignored
  - do not get any support from other students when they need it
  - do not want to have friends

5. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

**The individuals that this policy applies to:**
This policy relates directly to the rights and responsibilities of ALL individuals in our school community, namely the students, staff and parents.

**Responsibilities of Students**
- to behave at all times in accordance with the School’s Charter
- to report any instances of bullying (including the bullying of others)
- if possible, assist someone who is being bullied
- not to bully others
- to contribute positively towards the School Community

**What students can do if they are being bullied**
Typically, victims of bullying are generally anxious, insecure, cautious, sensitive and might suffer a fall in their self esteem. They can also feel lonely and ‘abandoned’. It is important that the victim ‘de-powers’ the actions of the bully by sharing their experience with either their parents or teacher. Victims should report the incident to a teacher or their parents.

**Responsibilities of staff:**
- to behave at all times in accordance with the School’s Charter
- to model appropriate behaviour at all times
- to deal with all reported and observed incidences of bullying as per this policy
- to ensure that children are supervised at all times
- to report all instances of bullying to the relevant Head of School. (This may involve the bullying of students, staff and/or parents)
- to contribute positively towards the School Community.
Responsibilities of parents:
• to behave at all times in accordance with the School’s Charter;
• to leave the School grounds as soon as the School day begins, unless specifically invited to join a class or activity;
• to watch for signs that their child may be being bullied;
• if suspected, to inform the relevant Head of School with documented details;
• to allow the School to deal with incidents that occur at school;
• to report all instances of bullying to the relevant Head of School. (This may involve the bullying of students, staff and/or parents);
• to contribute positively towards the School Community.

What Parents/Staff can do if they suspect bullying:
By the time students tell someone they have been bullied, they often have tried everything they could to deal with the situation on their own. To tell someone in a position of authority is a hard step for them to take. Consequently, we need them to;
• feel believed and listened to.
• develop trust and talk openly about the incident/incidences.
• understand why the bullying occurred and discuss strategies for dealing with bullying and how to best protect themselves.
• regain confidence and ‘self worth’.

In general, most experts agree that parents and staff should;

a) Ask for information without interrogating, but encourage the student share information only as far as they would like to go. Believe the student but also remember that you are only hearing one side of the story. Gently reassure the student and give them confidence that the bullying will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

b) Reflect on the incident with the student and document important information such as;
- what happened and when it happened (refer to Procedure I in next section)
- who was involved
- where the incident occurred
- who witnessed the incident

c) Keep an ‘open mind and cool head’ and do not allocate blame to others or to the School.

d) It is important that you do not allocate blame or try to sort out the bullying incident without the help of the School.

e) Contact the relevant Head of School with all the relevant facts and information for action.
6. BULLYING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

At St. Andrew’s Grammar Primary School we define bullying as:

**Physical bullying** includes hitting, kicking, rude gestures, extortion, pushing and shoving, taking or damaging belongings – any form of physical behaviour which hurts others or their property.

**Verbal bullying** includes name calling, insulting, repeated teasing, racist remarks, threatening, sexual harassment and any form of verbal behaviour designed to hurt another.

**Psychological bullying** includes spreading nasty rumours, excluding someone from the group and isolating someone by preventing others from befriending them.

**Cyber bullying** includes the use of online media inappropriately.

St. Andrew’s Grammar Primary School has a no tolerance policy to bullying.

In our curriculum we provide opportunities for students to:

- Understand the nature of bullying through discussion and role-play.
- Understand personal space and safety through Health and Physical Education.
- Develop positive interpersonal and problem solving skills through classroom activities.
- Develop self-esteem and confidence by creating a positive learning environment.
- Acquire and promote a sense of altruism and compassion through “Virtues” programme.

**School Response Plan to Bullying**

1. If a student is bullied he/she is to say, “Stop! I don’t like it!”
2. If the bullying continues the student says, “Stop, I don’t like what you are doing and I will tell the teacher.”
3. The student then informs the duty teacher, the class teacher, a student leader or the administration if the bullying does not stop.
4. Meeting with teacher/Head of Primary
5. Contact parent/s.
6. Issue consequences – Timeout / Suspension
Flow Chart - How to Deal With Bullying

Individual interviews with each person involved. Get written statements.
Ask WHAT HAPPENED?

Is actual bullying occurring?
- Is the behaviour verbal, physical and/or indirect?
- Is the behaviour repeated and ongoing?

Yes → Refer to Head Of School

No → Revert to Behavioural Management Plan

Group meeting with mediator

Key Questions to ask:
1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking at the time?
3. Who has been affected?
4. How are you going to make this right?

Follow up
Intermittently ‘touch base’ with victim to ensure that bullying has ended and is not re-emerging.

Bystanders (if appropriate)
1. Have you witnessed the bullying behaviour?
2. Did you really like it?
3. How did you encourage/contribute towards the bullying by watching?

Notification
- Keep parents of both victim and perpetrators informed
- All notes and documentation to be placed on all student files
Restorative Practice Mediation Speech Guide

To all parties
“We are all here because there is a problem between the people in this room and we need to sort this out to help everyone here. Each person is going to get a turn to talk and during that time there should not be any interruptions at all.” (Not by the mediator either)

To the perpetrator/s (one at a time):
“I would like to start with ..................... Could you tell us what has happened? What was your part in this? What were you thinking at the time?”
You might need to provide prompts throughout like:
“What happened then?” or “What were you thinking at the time?”
If there is denial, try:
“Yes, by nasty things have been happening to ............... Tell me about this. What’s your part in this?”
If denial still continues, refer to written statements.

To the victim:
Could you tell us what has happened? How has this affected you?
You might need to provide prompts throughout like:
“What happened then?” or “What were you thinking at the time?” or “How do you feel?”

Revert back to the perpetrator/s:
“Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?”

Back to the victim:
“What do you think needs to happen to make things right?”

To the perpetrator/s:
“What do you think you need to do to make things right?”
Be encouraging. When some practical and relevant ideas are suggested say:
“Excellent! What else?” etc

Back to the victim:
“Is there anything else that you think either of you could still do to make things right?”

To both parties:
“Is there anything else that either/all of you would like to add?”

Individual interviews
The purpose of these is to reassure parties that the issue is being dealt with and to find out what happened.
• Remind all parties that information ‘left out’ is the same as lying
• Interview victim and reassure them that you are going to help them but you need to know exactly what has happened. Remind all parties that information ‘left out’ is the same as lying. Get a written statement.
• Interview all other parties. Remind all parties that information ‘left out’ is the same as lying. Get a written statement.
• On occasion it may be necessary to meet with parties individually again until a clear understanding of ‘what happened’ has been established.
• At this point, it is essential to establish that actual bullying is occurring. If not bullying but merely poor behaviour, revert to School behavioural policy.

Mediation Session
• To ensure a successful mediation process, you must be relaxed and have plenty of time available to see the session through. It can be a time consuming process but if done effectively it is well worth it.
• Sit all parties around a table or in a circle.
• Welcome all parties and make introductions, if necessary
• Outline clearly that each party will get the opportunity to give their perspective of what has occurred. There should not be any interruptions during this process. The aim is to get each person to reflect on the situation, on their own behaviour and where possible, to understand where their own behaviour is coming from. They then all need to consider how this affects others and how they can ‘fix’ things. This session will also provide good opportunity for each person’s feeling to be expressed and understood by the other people involved.
• Allow students time to think. Do not be afraid of silences. Use prompts to start up conversation again, but only if necessary.
• If students offer impractical solutions ask questions like” “So if this were to happen, would the bullying stop?”
• If a solution is offered that depends on someone else’s action, say: “I was thinking more about something that you could do yourself.”
• If the perpetrator expresses the opinion that the victim “asks for it in some way” do not reject their anger or frustrations. Accept their feelings but add: “........ is having a bad time in school”.

Consequences
While this is a ‘no blame’ approach, if a student has broken a school rule in the course of the bullying, this behaviour will be dealt with according to the School’s Behavioural Policy.

Parent contact and documentation
• Parents of both the victim and perpetrator/s must be kept informed.
• Full documentation of the incident must be kept and a copy placed in each student’s file.

Follow up
While the use of Restorative Practice is usually extremely effective and long lasting, there are times that bullying can resurface after a period of time has elapsed.

It is important to check with the victim from time to time to ensure that all is well. If bullying does start up again, repeat the process. Consequences might then have to be put in place.