



## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the school's Vision and Mission Statement, and its Code of Conduct.

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The role of Redhill School is to provide an appropriate education for all its students. A stable and secure learning environment is essential for achieving this goal. Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education.
- 1.2 Bullying can have short and long-term effects on the physical and mental well-being of students, on their engagement with school, on their self-confidence and on their ability to pursue ambitions and interests.
- 1.3 At Redhill School, bullying is positively and firmly addressed by a range of School-based measures and strategies through which all members of the School community are enabled to act effectively to deal with this behaviour.
- 1.4 While it is recognized that the home and societal factors play a substantial role both in the cause as well as in the prevention of bullying, the role of the School in preventative work is also crucial and should not be underestimated. It follows that parents and students have a particularly important role and responsibility in helping the School to prevent and address School-based bullying. Furthermore, where bullying occurs off-campus but carries a resultant threat to the School's good name, its immediate community and/or its day-to-day functioning, parents and students have the responsibility to bring this to the School's attention.
- 1.5 The School will address bullying incidents that occur during any functions or events it institutes, be these on-campus or off-campus. However, the School has no jurisdiction over and may not discipline students for bullying incidents that occur at private functions not instituted by the School. In such cases, however, and at the behest of either the parents or the students, the School undertakes to assist, where possible and appropriate, with the emotional and social well-being of its students. Such assistance and support, nevertheless, may not be regarded as any form of sanctioning or adjudication by the School.

- 1.6 Redhill School strives to offer a safe and secure environment where it is understood that each individual has their own differences and that each of these differences are accepted and understood by all within the Redhill School community. This principle is in line with the spirit and purport of Redhill School's Equality and Diversity Policy. Bullying in all its forms is not tolerated in the slightest at Redhill School and the management and staff are committed to the promotion of a safe and caring environment for our students.
- 1.7 Redhill School undertakes to work together with staff, students and parents to address any issue of bullying that may arise.
- 1.8 The School aims to provide an environment of empathy and support for its students. It aims to provide an environment where it is easy and stress-free to report bullying in order for the necessary steps to be taken to eradicate such behaviour.
- 1.9 The purpose of this Policy and the accompanying procedures is to give direction and guidance to staff, students and parents in preventing and tackling school-based bullying behaviour amongst its students. It also aims to assist staff, parents and students in dealing with the potential impact on the School of any bullying behaviour by its students in their private capacity at functions not instituted by the School. That said, and regardless of the nature of the function at which bullying may occur, the School reserves the right to investigate and react in a manner it sees fit to any bullying behaviour that amounts to a contravention of its ethos and its core values.

## 2. **Definition of bullying**

Bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour - verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. These Procedures indicated below make clear that this definition includes cyber-bullying and identity-bullying (such as homophobic bullying and racist bullying).

Bullying is further defined for the purposes of this Policy as behaviour which is aggressive or harassing by an individual or a group, which behaviour may be repeated over time, which in turn intentionally causes pain, whether physical or emotional, to another individual or group. It is specifically understood that bullying can be both physical and non-physical.

## 3. **Types of bullying**

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst students:

**Physical Bullying:** Bullying, which is physical, includes but is not limited to, actions committed by an individual or a group where such individual or group hurts another student (for example, by stealing from, punching, pushing, shoving, kicking, poking, tripping, hitting, fighting, threatening, sexually harassing, extortion and/or preventing someone from leaving or entering an area or room) or intentionally damages their property.

**Non-Physical Bullying:** Bullying which is non-physical includes but is not limited to:

- a. Intimidation, which includes any bullying behaviour which takes the form of intimidation which may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as weapon. In addition, it could include particularly upsetting facial expressions which convey aggression and/or dislike.
- b. Provocative behaviour, which includes making a rude face or bodily gestures, the production of graffiti which is offensive and the wearing of racist or discriminatory badges or insignia.
- c. Verbal bullying, which includes persistent name-calling directed at the same individual which hurts, insults or humiliates. Verbal bullying also includes making fun of another person, the action of being repeatedly critical, teasing which is unkind and which is prolonged, the making of threats and the making of racist, sexist or homophobic comments or any comments that go against the listed grounds of the School's Equality and Diversity Policy.
- d. Relational bullying, which occurs when a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of a group, for example a class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the student in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the student or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs through gossiping, spreading rumours, the intentional splitting of friendships, the action of causing isolation/exclusion and hurt to an individual, and through other bullying.
- e. Sexual harassment, being (i) any unwelcome sexual attention from a person who knows or ought reasonably to know that such attention is unwelcome; (ii) unwelcome explicit or implicit behaviour, suggestions, messages or remarks of a sexual nature that have the effect of offending, intimidating or humiliating the complainant or a related person in circumstances which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the complainant or related person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated; (iii) implied or expressed promise of reward for complying with a sexually-oriented request; or (iv) implied or expressed threat of reprisal or actual reprisal for refusal to comply with a sexually oriented request. This may include but is not limited to, the making of derogatory comments relating to an individual's appearance, the spreading of gossip which is sexual in nature and/or making sexual jokes and innuendos.
- f. Cyberbullying, which is bullying that takes place over digital devices such as mobile phones, computers and tablets. It can occur through SMS, email, text, apps, online in social media forums or gaming where people can view, share and participate in the content. It includes the sending, posting or sharing of negative, harmful, false or mean content about another person. It also includes the sharing of private and/or personal information about another person which causes that person to feel embarrassed and/or humiliated. It includes the taking of explicit photographs or videos and distributing them to others (which may also constitute sexual harassment), as well as taking over someone's identity in order to spread rumours or lies about them.

- g. Damage to property, such as, but not limited to, damage to a student's clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a student's locker or other possession. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor and items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- h. Extortion, which is bullying where demands for money or other benefits, material or otherwise, may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted student not delivering on the demand). A student may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who was engaged in bullying behaviour.

#### 4. The policy

##### 4.1 The main aims of this anti-bullying policy are to:

- a. create a positive School culture and climate that is inclusive and welcoming of difference;
- b. create a School climate which is open, supportive and encourages students to disclose and discuss bullying behaviour;
- c. raise awareness amongst the entire School community (including School management, teachers, students, parents, volunteers etc.) that bullying is unacceptable behaviour;
- d. ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring through procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour;
- e. provide procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour;
- f. develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour;
- g. work with and through the various local groups in countering all forms of bullying and antisocial behaviour; and
- h. facilitate ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the School's anti-bullying policy.

##### 4.2 Commitment to key principles of best practice

The School recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on students. The School is, therefore, fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- a. A positive School culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity, encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment and promotes respectful relationships across the School community.
- b. Effective leadership.
- c. A school-wide approach.
- d. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- e. Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in students; and that explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying.

- f. Supervision and monitoring of students.
- g. Support and training for staff in dealing with bullying issues.
- h. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies).
- i. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

## 5. **Right to escalate the matter civilly or criminally**

Redhill School reserves its right to institute civil and/or criminal proceedings if the line between bullying and a criminal offence has been crossed. Redhill School is legally obliged to report certain criminal acts committed against children to the South African Police Service.

## 6. **The role of students**

Redhill School encourages the affected student or fellow students who witnessed the bullying - whether by a staff member, another student or any person – to report such incident to a teacher, School Psychologist/Councillor or Deputy Head of the phase.

The School will ensure to the extent necessary that complaints will be kept confidential and will not be published in any manner that could prejudice or victimise all parties involved in the incident, including witnesses. Similarly, any outcome in relation to a disciplinary process held, as a result of a complaint, will be kept confidential and will only be disclosed to the complainant/s and the student/s who is/are the subject of the disciplinary hearing and any other party who in the school's sole and absolute discretion should be advised.

The School also recognises that a student may be hesitant to report a bullying incident personally. Therefore, Redhill School promotes that a student report such bullying incident to their parent/legal guardian who may in turn, on behalf of the student, report the incident to a teacher, School Psychologist/Councillor or Deputy Head of the Phase.

## 7. **The role of all staff**

There is a positive duty upon every staff member of Redhill School to report any incident relating to bullying reported to them by any person, be it a student, staff member or as personally witnessed by them, to the Deputy in charge of the Phase, without undue delay.

Any failure to report such incident will be actionable in terms of the School's Disciplinary Procedure.

## 8. **The role of the Grade Heads, alternatively Head of School**

Upon an incident being lodged with the Head of Student Wellbeing, alternatively Head of School, s/he will immediately commence an investigation into the incident. If s/he is satisfied that there has in fact been any physical or nonphysical bullying, s/he is to proceed with a disciplinary procedure (with the consent of the Head of School should the incident have been reported to a Grade Head) or to take such steps as deemed appropriate by the Head of School.

9. **The role of the Head of School**

The Head of School will ensure that all staff and students are aware of this Policy, and that this Policy is applied fairly in all situations.

Once presented with the investigation report by the Deputy, the Head of School will assess it. If it is found to have merit (on which expert advice may be sought), the Head of School will convene a hearing in line with the Redhill School Disciplinary Procedure or proceed with any other procedure that is legally required and/or found to be appropriate in the circumstances.

10. **Procedures and protocols**

The procedures for dealing with bullying are outlined in the Redhill School Disciplinary Procedure.

**REVIEW OF POLICY**

This policy may be reviewed from time to time.