

Bullying Policy

Contents of this policy

This policy consists of two parts.

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staff.

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PART A **Introduction**

We would like Bishops to be a place where everyone feels safe and respected. As such every Bishops boy has the right to:

- feel safe (emotionally and physically)
- learn, work and play without fear of being hurt or humiliated
- feel belonging, acceptance and friendship
- ask for help in stopping hurtful behaviour and to keep asking for help until the hurtful behaviour has stopped
- learn to solve problems with others in a helpful way
- be treated with respect by others

For this reason, we do not tolerate bullying or discrimination in any form. The policy of the school is to prevent bullying and discrimination from taking place, to stop it if it does take place and to deal with incidents if they occur. This policy outlines the school's definition of bullying and discrimination and details procedures for dealing with incidents if they occur.

Definitions of terms and concepts

“**Bishops**” is taken to include the Pre-preparatory School, Preparatory School and the College of the Diocesan College.



“**The School**” is taken to mean Bishops.

“**Staff**” is taken to mean all individuals employed by the school as teaching or coaching personnel.

“**Bullying**” is any abuse of power intended to hurt, injure, threaten or frighten another person, who is then intimidated and disempowered to the extent that he feels he cannot do anything about it.

“**Discrimination**” is any act in which an individual is treated differently because of some personal characteristic. Acts of discrimination can be intentional or unintentional and may be carried out covertly or overtly. For the purpose of this policy, an incident is deemed to be an act of discrimination if it is perceived as such by the victim.

“**House Director**” in this document can be read as House Director and/or Assistant House Director (or Housemaster and/or Assistant Housemaster for the Prep School).

Description of bullying

There are various types of bullying behaviour, which need to be spelled out so that they are clearly recognizable. Central to any prevention of bullying is knowing where to draw the line between what is acceptable and what is not, especially in relation to behaviours such as horseplay, schoolboy bantering or teasing. The following serve as examples of typical bullying behaviours:

Physical Bullying: This could include pushing around, hitting, kicking, taking or damaging someone else's property; acting either one-on-one, or else as a group against an individual.

Verbal Bullying. This could include name-calling, insults, “tuning”, “dis-ing” or taunts aimed at belittling or humiliating the victim, including racist or homophobic allusions and constant teasing. Verbal bullying could also take the form of a threat. This also includes constantly picking on someone, either in class, or during free time.

Psychological Bullying. This could include rejection by a group of an individual, rumour spreading, intimidation that is not physical. Psychological bullying could also take the form of constant threatening looks or aggressive posturing.

Social media bullying. This could include the use of messaging and other social network platforms to belittle, threaten or humiliate the victim.

Any misuse of power by seniors on juniors such as PT or fitness sessions which are not conducted by student leaders with the full knowledge and approval of the House Director are considered to be a form of bullying. Likewise any attempt by seniors or student leaders to impose order on, or gain compliance from, juniors through any physical means (such as beating with a stick or a cricket bat, or by forcing juniors to face groups of seniors acting in concert with the intention of intimidating or humiliating the junior) is by definition an abuse of power, and as such is bullying.

Bullying can also take place when teachers bully students, and also when groups of students gang up against a teacher.



Description of discrimination

Discrimination can take many forms. The following are typical examples of acts where discrimination is or may be taking place:

- Name calling.
- Derogatory comments about a person.
- Refusal to hold hands.
- Refusal to be partners.
- Refusal to work together.
- Refusal to sit next to each other.
- Dividing into racial groups.
- Physical abuse.
- Graffiti which are offensive to others on religious, racial, sexual orientation or gender grounds.
- Wearing racist insignia.
- Declining to participate or share for overt reasons pertaining to race, religion or perceived sexual orientation.
- Abuse of personal property.
- Offensive physical gestures or body language.
- Refusal to take material or resources home.
- Stereotypical comments in discussion.
- Disputes having racial, religious or homophobic overtones and which deteriorate into the use of offensive terminology.
- The intentional or unintentional bringing of racist toys/items/resources into the classroom.
- Excluding other individuals from activities on the grounds of race, religion or sexual orientation.
- Refusal to undertake a particular activity.
- Dismissal of another individual's viewpoint.
- Unwillingness to listen to alternative views.
- Aggressive manner towards ethnic or religious minority students in the classroom.
- Telling jokes that are offensive to members of a particular race or religious group, women or individuals with alternative sexual orientations.
- Imitating accents.
- Negative comments about individuals or groups pertaining to:
 - Appearance
 - Clothes
 - Food
 - Accent or dialect
 - Language
 - Status
 - Ability
 - Culture
 - Religion
 - Country of origin
 - Family
 - Sexual orientation



Reporting incidents of bullying / discrimination

It is the responsibility of every member of the Bishops community to report and respond to incidents of bullying and/or discrimination.

It is especially important that boys, staff and parents should act pro-actively in circumstance which might lead to bullying and/or discrimination. Student leaders especially need to be educated to take this responsibility very seriously.

Teachers should intervene immediately when they witness cases of bullying/discrimination and if the situation warrants it, refer the matter to the boys' House Director. As a guideline, staff should report all incidents of bullying to the House Directors of both the victim and perpetrator.

Confidential reporting (i.e. reporting where the informer is permitted to remain anonymous) must be allowed. Confidential reporting may happen to the House Director, Tutor, a teacher, the Chaplain or one of the School Psychologists but it must be passed on to the House Director unless it is clear the boy does not want to involve his House Director for some reason. In which case a School Psychologist must be involved.

PART B

Guidelines for staff on dealing with bullying / discrimination

Research shows that many incidents of bullying and discrimination in schools take place in the classroom in the presence of teachers. For this reason, teachers have a significant role to play in dealing with and helping to eradicate these types of anti-social behaviour.

When dealing with incidents of discrimination / bullying it is useful to identify the following:

- (1) Was the behaviour **hurtful**?
- (2) Was the behaviour intentional or **deliberate**?
- (3) Has the behaviour been **persistent**?
- (4) Has the behaviour **continued** in spite of warnings to the individual to desist?

These all needs to be considered in both the initial response of the teacher and how he/she decides to take it forward.

Teacher's Response:

1. The teacher must ensure that the poor behaviour stops for the remainder of the lesson.
2. If it is clear who is the victim, the teacher must ensure that he is able to continue with the lesson without intervention. (If he is not, the teacher should seek the help of a colleague while he/she takes the boy to the BSU or a member of his House Staff.)
3. If the lesson can continue this should happen but the perpetrator(s) and victim should be told that they must stay behind at the end of the lesson.
4. At the end of the lesson the teacher should briefly interview the boys to determine what happened. If necessary, he/she should make the boys write a short statement. (If there is not time the boys should be taken to the Deputy Head Discipline.)
5. If the teacher determines that the behaviour has been hurtful then he/she should report the incident to the House Directors of both the perpetrators and the victim.



6. The House Director must then investigate the incident and respond to it in terms of pastoral, educational and discipline requirements.
7. Communication with the teacher by the House Director is important, including letting him/her know the outcome(s).

House Director's Response

On receiving a report about Discrimination/Bullying a House Director must investigate the incident(s).

The investigation should include the following:

1. Interviewing the boy(s) involved to determine the what, when and why of the incident(s). This may include getting written statements.
2. Interviewing (if needed) any witnesses to the incident(s).
3. Checking on the disciplinary record of the boy(s).
4. Engaging with the House Directors of any other boys involved.
5. Ensuring, as far as possible, that the boy(s) are now safe.

Actions to be taken:

The House Director(s) must then determine what action to take. This action may involve the perpetrator(s) being disciplined but it should also involve counselling for all involved with the view of both educating and equipping boys. The BSU may be involved. Where possible a meeting to bring reconciliation between the boys should occur when all parties are ready for it.

If the House Director believes bullying/discrimination has taken place, he should inform the parents of the boy(s) about what happened and indicate to them the interventions being put in place.

If the House Director determines that discrimination/bullying has taken place he can issue the sanction but must engage with the Deputy Head Discipline before following through.

1. A verbal warning
2. An apology.
3. One or two demerits.
4. Saturday Detention
5. Counselling at the BSU.

If the Deputy Head Discipline, with the House Director input, decides the level of bullying requires a Disciplinary Meeting or Hearing this should be followed through.



Disciplinary consequences of bullying / discrimination

Each case of bullying should be considered on its own, and sanctions made according to the merits of each case. The Disciplinary Committee should respond to each situation in the light of what evidence they have before them, and the scale of punishments should reflect the scale of the bullying / discrimination.

Punishments may include:

- Detention / Work-party.
- Withdrawal of rights and privileges, appropriate to the offence and the individual concerned, including participation in sports or other activities, any position of leadership including student leadership (actual or potential).
- A temporary ban from visiting a particular House or Houses for a period of time.
- Suspension from his own House for a period of time, if the victim is in the same House.
- Suspension from boarding for a period of time
- Suspension from school for varying lengths of time.
- Expulsion from boarding.
- Expulsion from school.

If a boy is at the Prep, bullying / discrimination could lead to the withdrawal of the expectation of being allowed to proceed to the College.

School based interventions for dealing with bullying / discrimination

With respect to school-based interventions to address the issue of bullying and discrimination at Bishops, we recognize:

- There are no “quick-fix” solutions to the problem of bullying and discrimination. Interventions are time consuming and change slow. The School, however, commits itself to the implementation of this policy.
- Change is evolutionary. As such in order to change behaviour and create a school free of bullying and discrimination it is necessary to implement this policy, adapt it over time and make it part of the school’s ethos.
- The whole school community needs to be involved in creating a bullying-free and discrimination-free school. As such efforts should be made to involve the School’s Executive Committee, House Directors, Staff, Student leaders, Students and Parents in the implementation of this policy.
- Education of students on the issues of bullying and discrimination forms part of the Life Orientation curriculum. (Grade 8s and 9s look at this issue in terms of personal development and social development. Grade 10s look at gender stereotyping, with particular reference to toxic masculinity. Grade 11s and 12s focus on interpersonal skills development, relationships and conflict resolution.) Topics covered include:
 - Cyberbullying – understanding what it is and tips on how to protect yourself.



- Human rights, bullying and discrimination. Exercises around definitions and concepts, avenues of reporting as well as prevention.
 - Emotional resilience.
 - Self-esteem and appreciation of differences.
 - The bystander effect.
 - Interpersonal skills development.
 - Relationships and conflict resolution.
- In addition, the school has committed to undertaking periodic surveys to measure the current level of bullying / discrimination.

Education of staff with respect to bullying / discrimination

Training of the staff should focus on:

- Communicating the content of this policy.
- Increasing staff insight into the process and psychodynamics of bullying, discrimination and victimisation.
- Clearly outlining the procedures to be followed in dealing with incidents of bullying / discrimination.
- Making it clear to staff what their responsibility is.
- Ensuring that staff understand the need for this policy to be applied consistently.

Interventions at the Bishops Support Unit

The BSU takes the issue of bullying and discrimination very seriously. Our school psychologists are committed to working with both victims and perpetrators to ensure that victims are supported emotionally, and that perpetrators can learn from their mistakes and cultivate the appropriate levels of respect which the school expects from them.

These interventions can take the form of:

- Individual counselling sessions
- Crisis counselling sessions
- Group counselling
- Reconciliation meetings between victims and perpetrators.

The BSU works with the whole school community (boys, parents and teachers). Psychologists are committed to upholding client confidentiality. Counselling interventions are separate from the disciplinary structures of the school. While counselling will often form part of the recommendations of the disciplinary process, the primary focus of the BSU's interventions are to support the boys' emotional wellbeing.

Please consult the BSU for more details on their counselling interventions.