

BISHOPS
POLICY ON BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION

2015-05-04

Contents of this policy

This policy consists of three parts.

PART A: Outlines information useful to **pupils, parents** and **teaching staff**.

- Introduction
- Definitions of terms and concepts
- Description of bullying
- Description of discrimination
- Reporting incidents of bullying / discrimination

PART B: Contains information useful to **teaching staff**.

- Guidelines for staff on dealing with bullying / discrimination
- School based interventions for dealing with bullying / discrimination
- Disciplinary consequences of bullying / discrimination
- Education of staff with respect to bullying / discrimination

PART C: Contains information useful to **counsellors**.

- Counselling interventions in situations involving bullying / discrimination

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 politely and 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 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 academic or teaching 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.

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 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 pupils, and also when groups of pupils gang up against a teacher.

Description of discrimination

Discrimination can take many forms. The following are typical examples of acts of discrimination:

- 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 (sometimes).
- Physical abuse.

- Graffiti or chalking of slogans 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 (e.g. golly).
- Excluding other individuals from activities on the grounds of race, religion or sexual orientation.
- Refusal to undertake a particular activity.
- Articulating or repeating comments brought from home or the media.
- Dismissal of another individual's viewpoint.
- Unwillingness to listen to alternative views.
- Aggressive manner towards ethnic or religious minority pupils 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, so that the House Director can approach the victim or the perpetrator and start bringing the behaviour out into the open. Confidential reporting must also be allowed to the Chaplain or the School Counsellors, who should then approach the House Director of the boys concerned.

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 distinguish four levels of interventions based on the severity of the incident. The following criteria are used to assess the severity of the incident:

- (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?

LEVEL ONE

If the behaviour is both **hurtful** and **deliberate** it should be dealt with by the teacher who witnesses it or the teacher to whom it has been reported.

In dealing with incidents at this level, the following **principles** should be followed:

- Acknowledge the need for intervention.
- Identify incident, perpetrator and victim.
- Put a stop to it and deal with or challenge it immediately.
- Acknowledge that it has happened or is happening.
- Be specific as to what the incident is and is about.
- Make all present aware that it has happened and is being dealt with.
- Ensure that the perpetrator and witnesses realize that the incident is a form of bullying or discrimination.
- Explain why it has been stopped. Possible explanations could include: personal moral outrage; offensive to peers and others; socially unacceptable; inflammatory behaviour; detrimental to school ethos and classroom atmosphere; demeaning to self-esteem of victim, reflects poorly on character and/or self esteem of perpetrator, against school policy; against the law.
- Protect the victim's welfare and support him.

- Counsel the victim at the earliest possible point.
- Sanction perpetrator at the earliest possible point.
- Talk through incident in class, public, in small groups, in pairs, or with the individuals involved (where appropriate).
- Report the incident to the House Director of the boys involved.
- Counselling of perpetrator to establish:
 - Reasons for the behaviour.
 - Ascertain underlying attitudes.
 - Determine possible influences which may be sustaining the attitudes manifested.
 - Reiterate norms/ accepted codes of acceptable behaviour.
 - Elicit from perpetrator whether sanctions are perceived as just.
- Both the perpetrator and victim are struggling with similar developmental challenges and need support in handling their feelings about what is happening. They both need to be supported and encouraged to own their share in working to solve the problem.
- Pupils should be re-empowered by being encouraged to be assertive rather than have staff “rescuing” them. Thus in addition to stopping the hurtful behaviour it is essential that we try and teach more adaptive behaviour skills to both the victim and the perpetrator.

Teachers have a responsibility to adopt the following **specific strategies** for dealing with incidents at this level:

- On witnessing or hearing incidents, intervene immediately.
- Stop everybody if the incident is related to whole class or audible publicly. Should the incident be within the context of a smaller group, keep any response contained within that group.
- Stress gravity by calling for everybody’s attention.
- Seek an opinion or response from the class.
- Support anger or indignation of the victim, thereby legitimising the natural anger or expression of feeling at the hurt or affront.
- Utilise the incident to demonstrate to the wider audience the unacceptability of such behaviour if the victim is confident and secure that it will help in the future.
- Do not isolate victim or add additional burden.
- When circumstances permit personally question the victim and the perpetrator (at the earliest convenience which may mean deviating from original plan for the lesson or activity, or finding alternative work for the rest of the class).
- Establish the veracity of the incident if you weren’t actually a witness.
- Report the incident to the boys’ House Director(s) and outline what action you have taken.
- Invoke any appropriate disciplinary measures or if you consider the incident to be serious enough, refer it to the House Director(s) of the boys involved.
- Victim, perpetrator and the witnesses should be informed of subsequent chain of events.
- Follow through with the agreed sanctions.

LEVEL TWO.

If the behaviour is **hurtful, deliberate** and **persistent**, a behavioural warning should be issued to the perpetrator, as outlined below:

- The House Director (or in the case of the prep school the class teacher) issues a warning (in writing) making it very clear what behaviour is unacceptable. At this point the victim has the right to remain anonymous.
- The perpetrator can choose to respond to the warning in one of three ways:
 1. Choose to stop the behaviour immediately.
 2. Chooses to ask for help to solve the problem and to tell his side of the story. This can be done either to the House Director or a Counsellor.
 3. Choose to continue with the unacceptable behaviour and then face the consequences.
- Keep a copy of the written warning together with a record of the pupil's chosen response on file.

LEVEL THREE.

If the behaviour is **hurtful, deliberate, persistent** and **continues** after a warning has been issued then the following procedure should be followed:

- The victim needs to make a statement to the House Director. This should preferably be a written statement.
- The House Director should interview the perpetrator, give him an opportunity to tell his story and then negotiate with him to form a Mediation Agreement. The perpetrator should be helped to identify the hurtful behaviours and substitute behaviours which are more helpful. If it becomes obvious that the personalities of the two parties involved are such that they are incompatible then a No-Contact Contract should be established in order to eliminate the hurtful behaviour. Ideally this agreement should be written down and signed as a contract between the perpetrator and his House Director.
- The parents of both parties are to be informed of what has happened and the action that has been taken.
- Documentation of this process, together with the statements should be kept on file.

LEVEL FOUR.

This stage is reached when a Behaviour Warning has been issued, opportunities to modify behaviour have been provided through Mediation or a No-Contact Contract, and the pupil deliberately chooses to disregard the terms of this contract and continue the harmful behaviour.

In certain circumstances severe cases of bullying, victimisation or discrimination (for example, incidents which involve physical beatings, severe humiliation of others or damage to property) may also warrant intervention at this level.

If the situation reaches this level, the House Director should:

- Obtain statements from all parties involved (including witnesses).
- Inform the parents of both the victim(s) and perpetrator(s).
- Inform the Principal / Headmaster who may decide to ask the House Director to refer the matter to the Disciplinary Committee for a Disciplinary Hearing.

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).
- Suspension from school for varying lengths of time.
- 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, Peer Counsellors, Pupils and Parents in the implementation of this policy.
- Education of pupils on the issues of bullying and discrimination should be part of the Life Orientation curriculum. In particular the following should be covered:
 - Exercises designed to identify bullies, perpetrators of discrimination and victims.
 - Exercises which allow for self identification of victims.
 - Age appropriate explanation of this policy and its implications.
 - Teaching "defender behaviour" (including assertiveness training, standing up for victims, encouraging reporting of both incidents).
 - Surveys to measure the current level of bullying / discrimination.
 - Discrimination (racial, religious, gender, sexual orientation).
- It is recommended that "bully / discrimination boxes" be established within the school. This would allow for the anonymous reporting of incidents of bullying / discrimination and allow House Directors to follow-up on cases of reported bullying thus bringing the behaviour out into the open. These boxes should be established on a House-by-house basis at the discretion of the House Director.

Education of staff with respect to bullying / discrimination

Training of the staff should focus on:

- Explaining the content of this policy.
- Gaining consensus on what constitutes bullying/discrimination.
- 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.

PART C

Counselling interventions in situations involving bullying / discrimination

General Counselling Department strategies for preventing and dealing with cases of bullying and discrimination:

The following **general strategies** should form part of the Counselling Department's interventions to deal with bullying and discrimination at Bishops:

- Staff training
- Age appropriate psycho-education for all pupils
- Emotional and psychological support of victims
- Counselling interventions with perpetrators
- Working with parents where appropriate
- Behaviour modification and counselling of perpetrators
- Counselling interventions, as far as possible, should not be seen as a punitive measure
- Perpetrators should be held accountable for their actions and as such may need to be punished for their behaviour
- Interventions should be designed to shift the balance of power and fear so that the victims of bullying and discrimination are re-empowered

Principles of counselling individuals involved in incidents of bullying discrimination:

When planning Counselling interventions, the following **principles** should be followed:

- When dealing with incidents of bullying/ discrimination, Counsellors need to be aware of their own attitudes and feelings towards bullying/ discrimination. It is important for Counsellors to avoid power struggles with perpetrators in the process of counselling.
- Where possible Counselling interventions should make use of an 'invitational approach' in which the perpetrator is invited to be part of the solution.
- Counselling interventions must aim to communicate fairness to the perpetrator by listening to his perspective. Counsellors should avoid locking perpetrators into a corner or shaming them. The Counsellors actions and approach should communicate to the perpetrator that the Counsellor is willing to work with him.
- A **no-blame approach** to bullying/discrimination should be adopted. The no-blame approach is based on the belief that the perpetrator is also a

victim; that he can change his need for dominance and status at the expense of others; and can adopt more positive values and learn alternative behaviours.

Guidelines for interventions with perpetrators of bullying / discrimination:

Counselling interventions with perpetrators are based on the assumption that all individuals have the potential to live differently and modify their behaviour if provided with suitable learning opportunities.

Counselling interventions with perpetrators should aim to teach alternative behaviours. For example perpetrators could be taught:

- Mediating and negotiating skills
- Empathy training
- Effective communication
- Problem solving
- Life-management skills
- Self-control
- Rational decision making
- To gain greater insight into their own behaviour and the underlying psychological processes
- Social skills
- Alternative ways of dealing with aggression and frustration

In dealing with the **aggressive perpetrators** the following principles should be applied:

- It is helpful to consider the perpetrator as operating within the context of Lazarus' theory (i.e. that the aggressive perpetrator views "ambiguous actions by others as stressors that are threatening and controllable, a combination that within the perpetrator's frame of reference merits direct action.")
- Intervention should therefore focus on helping the perpetrator to alter the speed and content of appraisals of situations.
- This intervention focuses on a cognitive behavioural approach in which perpetrators are taught to re-frame situations. However, behaviour modification principles of punishment and rewards could also be used to alter behaviour and thus support the process of change.

In dealing with **passive perpetrators**, the following principles should be applied:

- Research suggests that passive perpetrators admire the aggressive perpetrators and therefore tend to appraise situations in the same way as aggressive perpetrators.
- Therefore passive perpetrators need to be taught to minimize the need to affiliate with the aggressive perpetrators. This can be achieved by increasing their confidence and self-esteem, and developing their social and friendship skills.

Use of bibliotherapy to increase awareness of bullying / discrimination:

Books that have stories of different forms of bullying, social exclusion or discrimination may be helpful because they provide boys with the opportunity to learn:

- to identify incidents of bullying and discrimination
- to verbalise thoughts and feelings
- alternative solutions to problems
- not to feel isolated and alone
- to analyze their attitudes and behaviours
- to identify alternative solutions and coping strategies.

Bibliotherapy allows Counsellors to discuss the stories with the pupils. Such discussion could focus on the character's behaviours, feelings, thoughts, relationships, actions and reactions, and the interaction of cause and effect.

Use of role – plays and psycho-drama:

Role plays provide a non-threatening, safe way of experiencing situations in a new way. They also allow the opportunity for individuals to learn and experiment with alternative forms of behaviour.

Group Interventions:

Using small heterogeneous groups (with both the perpetrators and the victims of bullying / discrimination) can provide an opportunity in which boys can learn to talk to one another. This approach provides the perpetrator with an opportunity to experience the victim's abuse firsthand.

It is not recommended that homogenous small groups consisting only of perpetrators be established because this could lead to a situation where perpetrators could reinforce one another's behaviour, attitudes and beliefs.

Setting up of homogenous groups works well for victims as they are able to reinforce one another. These provide:

- Empathic support as it enables victims to see that their experience is not unique and that others share the same feelings.

- Psycho-educational opportunities. Victims can learn new skills and strategies that enable them to protect themselves (For example not playing the role of a victim / use of non-victim body language / assertiveness skills and social skills.)
- Opportunities for role-plays, psychodrama and symbolic modelling using videos and fictional accounts of bullying / discrimination, combined with discussions.

Group interventions are time consuming. Research indicates a minimum of 12, one hour sessions for such interventions.

It is helpful to include bystanders in the groups.

A possible process for group intervention could consist of:

- Providing the opportunity for the group to listen carefully to the victim's story. The victim(s) should be encouraged to tell their story using both "facts" and feelings.
- Explaining to the group that the victim has a problem. This problem should be discussed in detail and stated clearly.
- Without blaming anyone, explain that individuals in the group are responsible for and can do something about the problem.
- Allow the group to brainstorm possible solutions. Try to prompt group members to think about the role bystanders play.
- Arrange a follow-up, individual meeting with each member of the group a week later.
- Convey certainty that action will be taken to help victim.
- Throughout, impress that all people are basically good although sometimes behaviour is misdirected and happens without thought.