

Sarah Thompson School Anti Bullying Policy

1. Rationale

Sarah Thompson School recognizes that there exists the potential for bullying to take place as such; this policy was devised to ensure bullying behaviors will not be tolerated. All members of our school community have the right to work and play in a secure and caring environment that is free from bullying. All members also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

2. Aim

The aim of this policy is to make clear that the school provides a supportive environment for all students and to provide a procedure for dealing with allegations and incidents of bullying. Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff members implement this policy in a consistent, fair, and reasonable manner.

3. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance causing embarrassment, pain, or discomfort to someone. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. It can be planned and organized, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of students.

4. Types of Bullying

Verbal Bullying

- Teasing
- Name calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening
- Daring others to do things they know to be dangerous or wrong

Social (Relational) Bullying

- Excluding
- Isolating
- Ignoring
- Demeaning
- Ridiculing
- Spreading rumors/gossip
- Passing notes
- Using peer pressure to intimidate

- Threatening gestures or looks
- Embarrassing someone in public

Physical Bullying

- Hitting or beating
- Pushing
- Pinching
- Tripping
- Choking
- Kicking
- Shoving
- Holding
- Spitting
- Stealing
- Locking in or out of a space
- Throwing objects at others
- Damaging property or possessions
- Making mean or rude hand gestures
- Physical acts that are humiliating acts (“wedgies”, pulling up of skirts)
- Threatening with a weapon (any object used to inflict harm)
- Inflicting bodily harm

Cyber Bullying

Bullying that takes place using electronic technology (cell phones, computers, tablets, etc.) as well as communication tools (social media sites, text messages, chat rooms, instant chat, websites, etc.)

- Teasing and being made fun of
- Spreading rumors online
- Sending unwanted messages and/or pictures
- Defamation
- Threatening
- Inappropriate sexual comments

Bullying of School Staff

Bullying of school staff (teachers and responsible adults) by means of physical assault, damage to property, verbal abuse, threatening behavior etc. is also completely unacceptable.

5. Links with Other School Policies

Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones Policy, Student Discipline (Policy IF), Individual Rights Protection Act (Policy GAA), Personal Harassment (Policy GBEB), Guidance and Counseling Program (Policy HGBK), Digital Citizenship (Policy IFCL), Responsible Use Agreement (Procedure CNC)

6. Participation and Consultation Process

Gathering/reviewing data and encouraging participation are critical components of a successful program; we will manage this aspect of the policy by:

- Awareness raising programs (National anti-bullying week, Pink Shirt Day, curriculum)
- Survey/questionnaires distributes to students, parents, and entire staff
- Obtaining views of student representatives
- Seeking the views of parents as needed
- Monitoring evaluation and review

7. Responsibilities of All Stakeholders

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:

- Encourage our students to have self-esteem, self-respect, and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example a high standard of personal and social behavior we expect of our students
- Discuss bullying with all classes, ensuring that all of our students learn the damage it can cause to both the child who is bullied, the bully, and the bystanders. As well, the importance of telling a trusted adult about bullying when it happens
- Be alert to signs of distress and other indications of bullying
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them
- Report suspected cases of bullying to the Principal, Assistant Principal, and/or Child Development Advisor
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying and report back promptly on the action that has been taken
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures

The Responsibilities of Students

We expect our student to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity
- Intervene and protect the student who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so
- Report to a teacher any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behavior in their children, which might be evidence of bullying
- Advising their children to report any bullying to a teacher or trusted adult and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other students
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken
- Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved
- Co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth. Point out the implications of bullying for both the children bullied and the bullies themselves

The Responsibilities of All

Everyone should:

- Work together to combat bullying

8. Preventative Measures

Sarah Thompson School believes in being proactive. To this end, our staff will:

- Implement procedures to confront bullying in any form
- Promote the use of a range of teaching and learning styles and strategies that challenge bullying behavior
- Regularly promote and review the Anti-Bullying policy with staff, students and parents
- Provide training on anti-bullying to staff and students
- Teach students to respect themselves, respect others and to respect others' property
- Lessons on friendship and bullying are integrated into the curriculum along with lessons on making wise choices and displaying appropriate behavior

9. Procedures for Dealing with Incidents of Bullying Behavior

Dealing with incidents

- Upon learning about a bullying incident ensure that both the bully and the bullied are NOT together at initial meet to discuss the incident as this can take whatever power the victim has left away from them
- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be investigated and dealt with immediately by the teacher approached
- If a racial element to the bullying is suspected the Principal must be informed immediately

- Students will be required to complete a Choices Form
- The teacher will record the details of the incident on the Choices Form and inform the Principal
- The Choices Form will be kept by the Principal - All the parties will be interviewed and a record made
- Homeroom teacher of the bullied student will be informed
- The appropriate strategy and plan of action to combat the bullying will be decided upon
- The implementation of the strategy will be overseen by the Principal
- Parents will be kept informed by the relevant staff
- Any sanctions will be determined by the Principal

Serious Incidents

- Will be referred to the Principal
- Parents would be requested to come and discuss matters
- The incident would be noted down and put into the child's personal file

In any incident of bullying our staff are aware of the following principles:

- It is important that children who experience bullying can be heard.
- It is important to note that people react differently to bullying and it is often very difficult to tell if someone is upset or hurt.
- If children feel upset, they are encouraged to speak to their teacher or a trusted adult at an appropriate time.
- It must be emphasized to the children that they should NEVER take the law into their own hands and should remember that physical aggression is not acceptable.
- They should be reassured that the adult will try to sort out the problem as calmly as possible.

Reporting and Recording

- All incidents must be reported and recorded in full and the records kept in administrative file
- Reports of bullying will be logged by a staff member on the Choices Form.
- The forms are kept in the school office. The incidents will be updated and the names of students and staff who are involved will be written out in full and not abbreviated. This record of bullying will enable patterns to be identified.

Supporting Students

Bullied Students: Staff who deal with students who have been bullied must always offer reassurance. Students who have been bullied will be given support.

Bullies: It is recognized that support must also be given to the perpetrator. Changing the attitude and behavior of bullies will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the school. However, the school recognizes that sanctions will also have to be used against bullies.

All the children concerned should be fully involved in the discussions leading up to the solution and should not be left feeling isolated. Honest group discussions that involve both bullied and bully with other children of their choice attendant and encouraged to participate, help the children to resolve the matter themselves with support and vigilance from the staff is the most effective way. Parents will need to be kept fully informed.

* Ensure that the victim is comfortable with a meeting with the bully PRIOR to arranging the meet. Be aware of power imbalances that may negatively affect the bullied student.

Sanctions

Where students do not respond to preventative strategies to combat bullying, tougher action will be taken to deal with persistent and violent bullying. Sanctions are determined by the nature of the bullying on a case-to-case basis. Sanctions might include:

- Writing a letter of apology
- Removal from the group (in class)
- Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges
- Withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum
- Detention
- Short term in school suspension
- Fixed term and permanent exclusion from school. Exclusion would only be considered in a case of extreme and continuing bad behavior, bullying, sexual harassment etc. Any exclusion for even a short period would be discussed and agreed by the Superintendent and the Principal.

Involving Parents

Parents, as well as all staff and students, should know that the school will not tolerate bullying, and takes a positive, active approach to educating students to combat it. Parents will be informed of the policy and procedures. Parents of students who are being bullied and parents of the bullies will be involved in the solution to the problem as appropriate.

Involving Students

Students may be directed to the Child Development Advisor to learn effective strategies for bullying. Student Leadership will have an input into the anti-bullying strategy. A major part of the strategy will consist of educating students in how to cope with bullying. Students must know to whom they should go if they are being bullied or if they are concerned about another child.

10. Continuous Professional Development of Staff

Sarah Thompson is dedicated to the continuous staff learning and teaching of anti-bullying strategies. All staff will be provided with resources and information in the area of bullying prevention and anti-bullying.

11. Monitoring and Review

To ensure Sarah Thompson School's Anti-bullying Policy is as effective as possible it will be reviewed annually and appropriate changes will be made accordingly as under direction of the school Principal.

Signature

Date

Michelle Doz
Sarah Thompson School Principal