



POLICY ON BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION

RECORD MANAGEMENT					
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1. PURPOSE

The Board of Governors (Board) places ethical behaviour and good governance at the centre of its culture. Rondebosch Boys' High School (RBHS) expects scholars, staff members and parents to act in accordance with the understanding that with 'rights' come 'responsibilities'. It is therefore the responsibility of scholars, staff members and parents to uphold the basic rights mentioned below.

2. SCHOLAR RIGHTS

Every scholar at RBHS has the right to:

- 2.1. Feel safe emotionally and physically;
- 2.2. Learn, work and play without fear of being hurt;
- 2.3. Know belonging, acceptance and friendship;
- 2.4. Expect respect for individual qualities as well as differences;
- 2.5. Ask for help in stopping hurtful behaviour;
- 2.6. Keep asking for help until the hurtful behaviour has stopped;
- 2.7. Learn how to solve problems with others in a way that is helpful, not hurtful; and
- 2.8. Be treated politely by others.

3. STAFF TRAINING

RBHS staff training includes:



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- 3.1. The content of this policy;
- 3.2. Gaining consensus on what constitutes bullying and/ or discrimination;
- 3.3. Increased insight into the process and psychodynamics of bullying, discrimination and victimisation;
- 3.4. The steps to be taken when addressing incidents of bullying and / or discrimination;
- 3.5. Understanding associated responsibilities; and
- 3.6. Understanding of the need for this policy to be applied consistently.

4. DEFINITION OF A BULLY

There are various types of bullying behaviour, which need to be clearly articulated so that they are clearly recognisable. 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, scholar bantering or teasing. The following serve as examples of typical bullying behaviours:



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4.1. Physical Bullying

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

4.2. Verbal Bullying

This could include name-calling, insults, "tuning", "dissing" 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. This form of bullying may also occur in the form of cyber-bullying consisting of written threats or insults or slights on social media or communication platforms online.

4.3. Psychological Bullying

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

4.4. Misuse of power

Any misuse of power by seniors on juniors is considered to be a form of bullying. Likewise any attempt by senior members of the school to impose order on, or gain compliance from, juniors through any physical means, such as 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.

4.5. Bullying can also take place when educators bully scholars, and also when groups of scholars gang up against an educator.

5. DEFINITION OF DISCRIMINATION

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



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- 5.1. Name calling
- 5.2. Derogatory comments about a person
- 5.3. Refusal to be partners
- 5.4. Refusal to work together
- 5.5. Refusal to sit next to each other
- 5.6. Dividing into racial groups
- 5.7. Physical abuse
- 5.8. Graffiti or chalking of slogans which are offensive to others on religious, racial, sexual orientation or gender grounds
- 5.9. Wearing racist insignia
- 5.10. Declining to participate or share for overt reasons pertaining to race, religion or perceived sexual orientation
- 5.11. Abuse of personal property
- 5.12. Offensive physical gestures or body language
- 5.13. Stereotypical comments in discussion
- 5.14. Disputes having racial, religious or homophobic overtones and which deteriorate into the use of offensive terminology
- 5.15. Excluding other individuals from activities on the grounds of race, religion or perceived sexual orientation
- 5.16. Articulating or repeating comments brought from home or the media which may be offensive
- 5.17. Cyber Bullying, including any form of intimidation or bullying on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat, WhatsApp groups or any other platform or means of electronic communication



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- 5.18. Dismissal of another individual's viewpoint in an offensive or intolerant manner
- 5.19. Unwillingness to listen to alternative views
- 5.20. Aggressive manner towards ethnic or religious minority scholars in the classroom
- 5.21. Telling jokes that are offensive to members of a particular race or religious group, women or individuals with perceived alternative sexual orientations
- 5.22. Imitating accents
- 5.23. Negative comments about individuals or groups pertaining to:
 - 5.23.1. Appearance
 - 5.23.2. Clothes
 - 5.23.3. Food
 - 5.23.4. Accent or dialect
 - 5.23.5. Language
 - 5.23.6. Status or financial status
 - 5.23.7. Ability
 - 5.23.8. Culture
 - 5.23.9. Race
 - 5.23.10. Religion
 - 5.23.11. Country of origin
 - 5.23.12. Family
 - 5.23.13. Perceived sexual orientation

6. REPORTING INCIDENTS



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- 6.1. It is the responsibility of every member of the Rondebosch community to report and respond to incidents of bullying and / or discrimination without delay.
- 6.2. It is especially important that scholars, staff and parents should act pro-actively in circumstances which might lead to bullying and / or discrimination.
- 6.3. Each and every incident of bullying or discrimination must be reported to the Pastoral Deputy Head to be detailed in the personal files. It is at the discretion of the Pastoral Deputy Head to deal with a particular case personally or to delegate such a case to the Grade Head or School Counsellor. Severe cases of bullying or discrimination will automatically move directly to the Headmaster and Board for disciplinary action in line with the code of conduct.
- 6.4. RBHS has obtained the services of the Guardian, an anonymous reporting 'App'. Scholars are encouraged to download this application. The processes which follow a report from this app are contained in Annexure A.

7. SEVERITY CRITERIA

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

- Was the behaviour hurtful?
- Was the behaviour intentional or deliberate?
- Has the behaviour been persistent?
- Has the behaviour continued in spite of warnings to the individual to desist?

8. LEVEL 1 – HURTFUL AND DELIBERATE

If the behaviour is both hurtful and deliberate, it should be dealt with by the educator who witnesses it or the educator to whom it has been reported. In dealing with incidents at this level, the following steps should be followed:



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- 8.1. Acknowledge the need for intervention.
- 8.2. Identify incident, perpetrator and victim.
- 8.3. Put a stop to it and deal with or challenge it immediately.
- 8.4. Acknowledge that it has happened or is happening.
- 8.5. Be specific as to what the incident is and what it is about.
- 8.6. Make all present aware that it has happened and is being dealt with.
- 8.7. Ensure that the perpetrator and witnesses realize that the incident is a form of bullying or discrimination.



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- 8.8. 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.
- 8.9. Protect the victim's welfare and support them.
- 8.10. Counsel the victim at the earliest possible point, or refer to counsellors.
- 8.11. Sanction perpetrator at the earliest possible point.
- 8.12. Talk through incident in class, public, in small groups, in pairs, or with the individuals involved, where appropriate.
- 8.13. Report the incident to the Grade Head of the scholars involved.
- 8.14. Counsel perpetrator to establish or ascertain:
- 8.14.1. Reasons for the behaviour;
 - 8.14.2. Underlying attitudes;
 - 8.14.3. Possible influences which may be sustaining the attitudes manifested;
 - 8.14.4. Understanding of norms and accepted codes of acceptable behaviour, reiterating these are necessary; and
 - 8.14.5. Understanding from perpetrator as to 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.

Scholars 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.



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9. LEVEL 1 – STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Educators have a responsibility address incidents at level 1 as follows:

- 9.1. On witnessing or hearing incidents, intervene immediately.
- 9.2. Stop everybody if the incident is related to the whole class or audible publicly. Should the incident be within the context of a smaller group, keep any response contained within that group.
- 9.3. Stress the gravity of the incident by calling for everybody's attention.
- 9.4. Seek an opinion or response from the class.
- 9.5. Support anger or indignation of the victim, thereby legitimising the natural anger or expression of feeling at the hurt or affront.
- 9.6. 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.
- 9.7. Do not isolate victim or add additional burden.
- 9.8. 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.
- 9.9. Establish the veracity of the incident if you weren't actually a witness.
- 9.10. Report the incident to the Grade Head and outline what action you have taken.
- 9.11. Invoke any appropriate disciplinary measures, or, if you consider the incident to be serious enough, refer it to the Grade Head and Counsellor.
- 9.12. Victim, perpetrator and the witnesses should be informed of subsequent chain of events.
- 9.13. Follow through with the agreed sanctions.

10. LEVEL 2 – HURTFUL, DELIBERATE AND PERSISTENT



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

10.1. The Grade Head or Pastoral Head issues a warning in writing making it very clear what behaviour is unacceptable.

10.2. The perpetrator can choose to respond to the warning in one of three ways:

10.2.1. Choose to stop the behaviour immediately;

10.2.2. Choose to ask for help to solve the problem and to tell his side of the story. This can be done either to the Grade Head or a Counsellor; or

10.2.3. Choose to continue with the unacceptable behaviour and then face the consequences.

10.3. Keep a copy of the written warning together with a record of the learner's chosen response on file.

10.4. Parents of both perpetrator and victim must be informed.

11. LEVEL 3 – HURTFUL, DELIBERATE, PERSISTENT AND CONTINUING

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



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- 11.1. The victim needs to make a statement to the Grade Head. This should be a written statement.
- 11.2. The Grade Head should interview the perpetrator, give them an opportunity to tell their story and then negotiate with them 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. This agreement should be written down and signed as a contract between the perpetrator and the educator.
- 11.3. The parents of both parties are to be informed of what has happened and the action that has been taken.
- 11.4. Documentation of this process, together with the statements should be kept on file.

12. LEVEL 4 – BEHAVIOUR WARNING

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 learner 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 Pastoral Deputy and Grade Head should

- 12.1. Obtain statements from all parties involved, including witnesses.
- 12.2. Inform the parents of both the victim(s) and perpetrator(s).
- 12.3. Inform the principal who may decide to refer the matter to the Disciplinary Committee for a disciplinary hearing.

13. DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

Each case of bullying should be considered independently, and sanctions made according to the merits of each case. The Disciplinary Committee should respond to each situation in the light of Rondebosch Boys' High School Policy on Bullying and Discrimination

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what evidence they have before them, and the scale of punishments should reflect the scale of the bullying / discrimination.

Bullying or discrimination will be dealt with in accordance with the RBHS code of conduct. Punishments may include:

- Detention or 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;
- Suspension from school for varying lengths of time; or
- Expulsion from school.

14. INTERVENTIONS

There are no “quick-fix” solutions to the problem of bullying and discrimination. Interventions are time consuming and change is slow. RBHS, however, commits itself to the implementation of this policy.

Change is evolutionary. 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 RBHS’ executive committee, Grade Heads, staff and scholars in the implementation of this policy.

Education of scholars and adults on the issues of bullying and discrimination should be part of the Life Orientation curriculum. In particular the following should be addressed:



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- 14.1. Exercises designed to identify bullies, perpetrators of discrimination and victims;
- 14.2. Exercises which allow for self-identification of victims;
- 14.3. Age appropriate explanation of this policy and its implications;
- 14.4. Teaching “defender behaviour”, including assertiveness training, standing up for victims, encouraging reporting of both incidents;
- 14.5. Surveys to measure the current level of bullying / discrimination; and
- 14.6. Discrimination such as that on the basis of racial, religious, gender, or perceived sexual orientation.

15. ADOPTION

The Board hereby adopts this policy. For and on behalf of the RBHS Board of Governors:

Name: Jeremy Harris

Role: Chairman of the Board

Signature: 

Date: 12 March 2025



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16. ANNEXURE A: THE GUARDIAN APP

The Guardian offers a smart phone app for scholars that facilitates anonymous reporting of sexual abuse or bullying and gives children a safe and instant portal to report contentious issues. The school designates a team of staff members to receive the faceless reports, with any scholar who downloads the app able to report abuse or report any other matter where they may otherwise be afraid to speak up.

How does it work?

When a report is submitted, it will arrive as an e-mail to the pre-defined staff member, informing them to log in to the system to access the details of the report and take the necessary action to safeguard the child. The staff members have the ability to request further information from the reporter, but will never know their identity. This is extremely important as the power of the app is ensuring the anonymity of the reporter. Once the school investigates the matter, they can choose to keep the report on record, take further action or refer the matter to the relevant authorities.

Features and benefits

1. Schools are able to find out about issues sooner, thereby being able to deal with the issues before they become too big.
2. It breaks the "Don't tell" culture within the school
3. Learners can download the app for Free
4. The identity of the reporter is removed from the report and the school receives the information and can manage it internally.
5. The app provides for open communication with the anonymous reporter
6. It is convenient and easy to use.
7. It assists the school to identify trends and pick up early warning signs.

For further information watch this informative video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=Ushot_UXyTw or visit the Guardian Website:

<http://www.theguardian.co.za/schools/anonymous-reporting-app/>



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The designated Ambassador at Rondebosch is our school counsellor, Mrs Starke.

Mrs Starke will refer information, where required, to the designated Investigator, Dr Teubes who will work with the relevant Grade head.