

PROTOCOL FOR A BULLY FREE ZONE

We as a school have never condoned any aggressive behaviour from our learners and will never tolerate bullies or their behaviour.

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is **repeated**, or has the potential to be repeated, **over time**. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Types of Bullying

There are three types of bullying:

- **Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:**
 - Teasing
 - Name-calling
 - Inappropriate sexual comments
 - Taunting
 - Threatening to cause harm
- **Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:**
 - Leaving someone out on purpose
 - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
 - Spreading rumours about someone
 - Embarrassing someone in public
- **Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:**
 - Hitting/kicking/pinching
 - Spitting
 - Tripping/pushing
 - Taking or breaking someone's things
 - Making mean or rude hand gestures

"EVERY LEARNER FEELS VALUED AND INSPIRED IN OUR INNOVATIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM"

Where and When Bullying Happens

Bullying can occur during or after school hours. While most reported bullying happens in the school building, a significant percentage also happens in places like on the playground or the bus. Anywhere where an adult is not present.

It can also happen travelling to or from school, in the youth's neighbourhood, or on the Internet.

WHAT TO DO?

Learners should report any wrongdoing to their class teachers immediately for action.

On arriving home, they should inform their parents of what happened immediately.

Parents please follow up with your class teacher – keep a working relationship.

Your child will come home talking about the bully **every day**, and there will be incidents **every day**.

Please note that your child might have been **in an isolated incident** – and it was reported, and educator has given you feedback this is an INCIDENT (depending if it was by accident or not) If it was not by accident our School Code of Conduct is followed to the letter and learners are being punished accordingly.

How do I know if my child is being bullied?

Your child could be a victim of bullying if he/she:

- Is reluctant or refuses to go to school
- Clams up when you try to discuss school
- Demands some sort of change in a long-standing routine, like riding the bus to school or going to the park on Saturdays
- Does not want to participate in after-school activities or play with old friends
- Seems hungrier than usual after school - it might be a sign that someone is stealing his lunch money or that he is unwilling to brave the cafeteria at lunchtime
- Shows signs of physical distress such as headaches, stomach-aches, or nausea
- Goes to the nurse in order to avoid going to class
- Performance in school (grades, homework, attendance) suddenly declines
- Acts sullen, angry, and frequently wants to be left alone
- Uncharacteristically uses bad language
- Shows marked behaviour change after computer time or a phone call
- Starts asking for more lunch or transportation money without a clear explanation of why it is needed
- Has unexplained bruises or injuries

Could Your Child Be the Bully?

While you could never imagine your own sweetie excluding or teasing a classmate, 1 out of 5 kids in grades 6-10 admits to be a bully or doing at least some "bullying" (Nansel, et al, 2001).

Children know that bullying is wrong. That's why they do it when parents aren't around. That's why cyberbullying has become so common (the Internet is like one huge parentless mansion). And because adults are left in the dark, they don't often face repercussions for their actions. So they keep doing it.

Of course, you don't want to admit that your child could be a bully. But you definitely don't want to let your child *stay* a bully. Look for the signs

Your child could be a bully if he/she:

- Is exclusive - refuses to include certain kids in play or study
- Persists in certain inappropriate or unpleasant behaviour even after you have told him/her to stop
- Is very concerned with being and staying popular
- Seems intolerant of and/or shows contempt for children who are "different" or "weird"
- Frequently teases or taunts other children
- Constantly plays extremely aggressive videogames
- Hurts animals
- Observes you excluding, gossiping about, or otherwise hurting others: As parents we have a tremendous influence on our children. As human beings, we all occasionally exhibit some bullying behaviours. It's only natural and it doesn't mean we're bad people. But think honestly about your own behaviour and then ask -- do your kids also show these traits?

Bullying seems scary, it's always been going on. And it's probably been going on at the same level as it always has, but it's gotten much more media attention as of late.

So, don't let it overwhelm you or distract from your main goal: raising your child to be a kind, understanding, well-adjusted person.

Thanking you

Yours in Education

Ms L. Eloff
Principal

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115, 9TH RD NOORDWYK, MIDRAND
EMAIL: principal@noordwykprimary.co.za
michelle@noordwykprimary.co.za
DISTRICT: JHB EAST

TEL: 010 5904742
SCHOOL REG NO: 700400684
P.O. Box 7548, Halfway House, 1685