



# Durban Girls' High School

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P4

## NO-BULLYING POLICY

Durban Girls' High School learners are expected to conduct themselves in a concerned and responsible manner and with honesty and integrity at all times. They show respect for self, others, the school, society and the environment.

We adopt a zero tolerance approach to any form of bullying and harassment. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our learners, where:

- Individual differences are understood, appreciated and accepted.
- Individuals empathise with one another and offer support.

### Definitions and types of bullying:

Bullying is the deliberate intent/use of influence by one or more people to cause physical, emotional or psychological distress or harm, to intimidate other people. There are many different types of bullying, including:

- Cyber-bullying: the use of social networks, cell phone messages, email to spread gossip, rumours or deliver insults to people. Whether this occurs on or off the school property, the school reserves the right to take action as for other incidents of bullying.
- Physical bullying: causing someone physical harm through physical interactions with them. This may include pushing, bumping, or shouting.
- Verbal and non-verbal bullying: this can include gossiping and spreading rumours or directly insulting someone to her face, name-calling, hate speech, pranks, laughing at someone, facial expressions, humiliating someone.
- Vandalism: the wilful destruction or damage of someone's property or school property.
- Defamation of character: sharing other people's personal information, hacking into someone else's email or phone messages and pretending to be her, gossiping.
- Defamatory comments: damaging the good reputation of someone.
- Discrimination: behaving or speaking in a way which makes someone feel unwelcome and not accepted because of her actual or perceived sexuality, beliefs, religion, race group, cultural origins.
- Extortion: forcing someone else to give you her money, belongings, do your homework for you.
- Emotional / Psychological harassment: continuous threatening behaviour. This could include nasty looks, following people, whispering as they walk past, laughing at them as they pass, manipulation.
- Power misuse: using your age, grade you're in, leadership role to make a younger person feel not accepted.
- Relational bullying: the breaking of confidences and the deliberate splitting of a relationship or friendship.
- Social bullying: excluding a person from an activity, friendship, group.

**Teasing or playfulness is acceptable ONLY if all concerned find it acceptable.**  
**Bullying involves an imbalance of power, size or position to the disadvantage of one party.**

**Goals of the No-Bullying policy:**

- To aid, support and educate all staff, parents and learners in the maintenance of a safe and nurturing environment, which encourages the development of coping skills necessary for successful interaction of all parties.
- To provide a process of discovery, evaluation, monitoring, remediation and correction of hurtful behaviour for the bully and learner being bullied.
- To provide easily accessible processes by which learners can report bullying and receive adult support.
- To provide a process wherein the learner doing the bullying receives support, rehabilitation and education in the learning of alternative behaviours or discipline / consequences.
- To nurture the rights of the victim to a safe environment, but also to acknowledge that the bully is entitled to rehabilitation.

**Guidance for learners who experience bullying:**

- There are three ways to deal with bullying: Ignore it and walk away, report it to a person who is responsible and whom you confide in, or stand up to the bully.
- Reporting the incident is usually the preferable way of dealing with bullying. Go to a prefect, trusted teacher, register teacher, Head of Grade, Sport or Culture Head, or School Counsellor and explain what has happened, giving details of when, where and, if you know the reason, why the bullying occurred.
- If there is a witness to the bullying, give her name to this person.
- Avoid being a target for bullies. Suggestions include joining a society or club, sport or cultural activity where you meet new learners, find a meaningful activity and enjoy this time.
- Do not retaliate. This could result in further consequences and may exacerbate the situation.

**Disciplinary consequences - as per the Code of Conduct**

These will vary depending on the nature of the bullying and whether or not the offence is repeated and can include the following:

- Letter of apology
- Verbal warning
- Detention
- Community service
- Letter to or meeting with parent(s)/guardian
- Removal from lessons and breaks – learner to work in isolation
- Suspension from school
- Expulsion

## **Guidance for teachers on dealing with bullying – a suggested procedure:**

### Level 1

- Step 1: When bullying is reported to you, as soon as possible, listen to both sides of the story separately to ensure you have a clear understanding of ALL the facts.
- Step 2: Get both the victim and bully to write a statement of events. Use the Bullying Incident Report form for this.
- Step 3: Obtain statements from witnesses.
- Step 4: Refer to the Head of Grade, Deputy Principal and School Counsellor for mediation. For minor incidents an apology from the bully to the victim may be facilitated.
- Step 5: Keep written records on file.
- Step 6: Get report-back from the victim to ensure that the matter is settled and she is coping.

### Level 2

- Step 1: Refer to Step 1 in Level 1.
- Step 2: Get written statements from both the victim and the bully. Use the Bullying Incident Report form for this.
- Step 3: Obtain statements from witnesses.
- Step 4: Refer to the Head of Grade, Deputy Principal and Principal .
- Step 5: If deemed appropriate, mediation and reconciliation between bully and victim could be pursued. Suitable punishment as considered necessary.
- Step 6: Provide a secure way forward for the victim, when necessary, e.g. establish a buddy system for the victim during her day at school.
- Step 7: Keep written records of all correspondence and communication.
- Step 8: Follow up with both the victim and the bully a week and then a month later.
- Step 9: Refer to the School Counsellor for victim empowerment and rehabilitative counselling with the bully.

### Level 3

- Step 1: The matter is referred to the Deputy Principal or Principal.
- Step 2: The Deputy Principal / Principal will obtain written statements from both the victim and the bully as well as from witnesses.
- Step 3: Disciplinary action to be taken, if necessary, against the bully.
- Step 4: A secure way forward to be provided for the victim.
- Step 5:
  - 5.1 The parent / guardian of the victim needs to be informed as is necessary.
  - 5.2 The parent / guardian of the bully needs to be informed as is necessary.
- Step 6: Written records of all correspondence and communication to be kept on file.
- Step 7: Both victim and bully to be referred to School Counsellor for appropriate counselling and follow-up sessions, i.e. victim empowerment and rehabilitative therapy.  
One weekly session for at least six weeks is recommended, with a follow-up a month later. Recommend counselling where needed.