



## KENRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL – BULLYING POLICY

### Statement of Intent

Kenridge Primary School understands and recognises that bullying is an international problem that knows no class, distinction, ethnic boundaries or age. The school aims to provide a holistic and positive educational environment for all members of the school community. This environment promotes personal growth, healthy interpersonal relationships, wellness and freedom from discrimination and abuse. Therefore, bullying is a disrespectful and dangerous behaviour that will not be tolerated. The school acknowledges and attends to this responsibility with the utmost respect and commitment, and to this end, a policy has been developed and integrated to confront the serious nature of bullying on a consistent and continual basis.

### Policy Statement

Kenridge Primary School will not tolerate the bullying of any member of the school community and Kenridge Primary, as a school, is a bully-free zone.

### Definitions:

- **"Bullying"** is any repeated and pervasive written, verbal or electronic expression (cyber), physical acts or gestures, or a pattern of repeated behaviour, over a period of time, that is intended to cause distress upon one or more persons in the school, on the school grounds, in school vehicles, at school activities or at sanctioned school events. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, harassment, hazing, intimidation or the menacing acts of a person which may, but need not be based on the person's sex, race, colour, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, disability or sexual orientation.
- **Physical bullying** includes physical contact in the form of, but is not limited to: hitting, slapping, tripping, pushing, choking, hair pulling and biting. Making obscene gestures or facial expressions, deliberately ignoring. Intentionally excluding or ostracising another person from a group (peer, work, social). Extortion or stealing of money and possessions (theft) or damaging property or possessions (vandalism).
- **Written bullying** includes, but is not limited to: letter writing, note writing, graffiti writing and the drawing of pictures which are derogatory in nature, demeaning, hurtful and aimed at doing harm towards the image and well-being of another person.
- **Sexual bullying** includes, but is not limited to: unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. Homophobic or focused behaviour on the issue of sexuality.
- **Cyber bullying** includes, but is not limited to: the misuse of the internet, email, chat rooms and websites. Threats or intimidation via cell phone texting, calls, BBM or any social media services. The misuse of other forms of technology such as cameras and video facilities.
- **Verbal bullying** includes, but is not limited to: verbal assault, taunts,

insults, name calling, put downs, ridiculing, teasing, prejudiced remarks of a sexual or racist nature, threats, intimidation, blackmailing, the spreading of rumours, mimicking, playing nasty jokes or pranks and damage to a person's social reputation.

- **“Intimidation”** means a deliberate and intentional attempt to frighten a person using threats.
- **“Harassment”** means knowingly pursuing a pattern of conduct that is intended to threaten, alarm or terrorise another person.
- **"Hazing"** means committing an act against a person/s, or coercing a person/s into committing an act that creates a risk of harm to a person/s. This would include initiation practices. This also applies to any and all GANG initiation activities or practices.
- **“The school community”** refers to learners, all employees of the school; this includes academic and teaching personnel, administrative personnel, support and maintenance staff. Volunteers working on the school premises and student teachers are included in the definition.
- **“The school”** is taken to mean Kenridge Primary School.

### **Policy Aims**

- To create an environment where the value and integrity of all is upheld thus ensuring the safety and well being of the school community.
- To cultivate an empathy and positive regard for the school community through an ethos of understanding, tolerance, an appreciation for and acceptance of the unique differences amongst individuals and groups within the school community. We all have the right to human dignity and this must be instilled, nurtured and respected.
- To continually educate the school community on the definition of bullying; the types of behaviours which the school will not tolerate; the reporting and investigation procedure of bullying incidences; the applicable appropriate disciplinary measures and consequences for persistent breaches of this policy.
- To ensure that the school takes the issue of bullying very seriously and to assert that it is everyone's responsibility and right to report bullying of any kind.
- To empower victims of bullying to feel confident enough to implement this policy and to trust that the procedures outlined herein, will be followed to effectively end the bullying.
- To empower witnesses of bullying to report it. This fosters acts of care and compassion for others and supports a zero tolerance towards bullying.
- To enhance consistency in the approach towards addressing bullying and behaviour modification.
- To ensure the support and respect of the whole school community for the administration and implementation of this policy.
- To engender within the school community, a commitment to the prevention of bullying.

## **Recommended Procedure to be followed by Parents**

- Report bullying to the class teacher, sport coach or to the relevant After School Centre personnel as soon as possible.
- If bullying continues, request an appointment with the grade head, head of the relevant sport code or principal of the After School Centre. Should you feel your concerns have not been adequately addressed, request an appointment with the school's deputy principal who also serves as a member of the school's discipline committee, where after you are requested to make an appointment with the school principal, should you continue to feel dissatisfied.
- Try to bear in mind that there are many explanations for how and why a situation has arisen. Be prepared to hear other versions of what may have happened. This is a very emotional time for you, as a parent and it is understood that you wish to seek justice for your child as well as yourself. It is, however, crucial to remain objective as far as possible.
- Please trust that the school will endeavour at all times to serve in the best interests of your child.
- Please refrain from bringing outside incidents to the attention of the school. This means, but is not limited to: birthday parties, social events, external extra mural activities and play dates.
- We request your full cooperation with the school. Once a course of action has been decided, give the school sufficient time to implement it and support the school in their endeavours to do so.
- Please resist your desire to assume the position of the law.
- Refrain from any form of harassing or intimidation of any person/s on the school premises. Doing so will only aggravate the circumstances and destroy any attempts at reconciliation, which the school subscribes to as one of its responsibilities.
- The Bullying Policy of the school forms part of the school's general Code of Conduct and consequently, the school reserves the right to implement this policy at any point to address any form of behaviour which goes against the values of Kenridge Primary School, and which may even contravene the right listed in the Human Rights Charter contained within the South African Constitution.

## **Disciplinary Procedure and Actions**

Kenridge Primary School expects exemplary behaviour and outstanding conduct from the school community at all times; a stepwise, sequential protocol is adopted and used to address bullying.

### **STEP 1.**

1. Any person who is bullied or who witnesses bullying behaviour must report the incident to the relevant class teacher, sports coach, teacher on playground duty or the relevant After School Centre personnel on duty.
2. If any person feels they cannot verbally report the incident, they may make use of the bully boxes placed strategically around the school.

3. All reports, verbal or written, will be treated in strict confidence, investigated thoroughly and dealt with promptly and effectively by the relevant class teacher/s, grade head/s and support staff concerned.
4. All parties involved will be provided with an opportunity to express their experience of the incident and all discussions will be documented. A conflict resolution process may be adopted.
5. At this point, in the case of a learner being the victim of bullying, discussion is limited to the class teacher and the grade head who may thereafter consult with other support staff on a multi-disciplinary team at his or her discretion.
6. The type and extent of intervention will be dependent on a number of factors including the severity of the incident.
7. A record will be kept and in the case of minors, parents will be notified accordingly.
8. A person may be placed on a daily report and/or be admitted into counselling. (Counselling for a minor will require written parental consent.) The duration of such intervention will be determined by the multi-disciplinary team.
9. If a group dynamic is identified, the multi-disciplinary team may opt to organise educational workshops for the school community.
10. Kenridge Primary School will deal seriously with those who retaliate against any individual for reporting bullying.

### **STEP 2.**

1. Should the same person continue to demonstrate unacceptable behaviour, they will be referred to the school's discipline committee.
2. In the case of a minor, parents will be notified.
3. Should it be deemed applicable and beneficial, the respective person/s may be required to attend one or more consultations with the school psychologist as part of the school's attempt to modify the person/s unacceptable behaviour. In the case of a minor, these sessions will only commence with parental consent in writing.

*For both steps 1 and 2, efforts will be made to reconcile the persons involved where possible. All cases will be monitored closely to ensure that repeated incidents of bullying do not occur.*

### **STEP 3.**

Should continued unacceptable behaviour still manifest itself, the case will be dealt with by the school's discipline committee, in accordance with the steps laid down in the school's Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy.