

# St. Theresa's Anti Bullying Policy



The Golden Rule:

"In everything, do unto others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law." (Matthew 7: 12)



## **RATIONALE**

We at St Theresa's acknowledge the richness and diversity of each other. We respect, accept, understand and encourage each other to live in a safe harmonious and just environment.

At St Theresa's we promote self-esteem, self-confidence and self-discipline. Bullying behaviour is not tolerated.

We believe that the most effective approach in addressing bullying issues must involve a partnership between parents, teachers, students and relevant others.

## **DEFINITION**

Bullying is "Repeated intimidation over time of a physical, verbal or psychological nature of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons." (Rigby & Slee) Bullying results in either emotional or physical pain and/or distress to the victim.

### **Bullying can take many forms :**

#### **Physical Bullying**

including hitting, tripping and pushing, or invasion of personal space, making rude gestures

#### **Verbal Bullying**

including name calling, offensive language, insults, homophobic, religious or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.

#### **Visual Bullying**

including offensive notes or material, graffiti, or damaging property.

#### **Victimisation**

including stand-over tactics, picking on others, lying and spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, threats, repeated exclusion.

#### **Sexual Bullying**

including touching anyone in a sexual manner, sexually oriented jokes, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, inappropriate questions or remarks about someone's private life and inappropriate drawings or writing of a sexual nature.

#### **Cyber Bullying**

including the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress someone.

## **RIGHTS**

Every member of St. Theresa's school community has shared rights and responsibilities. These include the right

- To be and feel safe and protected
- To be treated with respect, politeness, understanding and justice
- To obtain maximum benefit from all school activities

# **RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **Responsibilities of School Staff**

- To be role models of appropriate behaviour and language at all times.
- To endeavour to provide a safe school environment for all members of the school community.
- To endeavour to provide a safe environment where children feel comfortable to report bullying.
- To listen to and react promptly to a child's concerns.
- To be observant for signs of suspected bullying.
- To ensure that children are given opportunities to develop the skills required to prevent or deal with bullying.
- To ensure that children are familiar with the school's policy of not tolerating bullying and the consequences should it occur.
- To seek the cooperation of parents/guardians of both the victim and the bully to resolve conflict situations.
- To follow the Restorative Practices model in dealing with conflict situations.

## **Responsibilities of Parents / Guardians**

- To be an appropriate role model for their children at all times.
- To listen to and observe their child for changes in behaviour that may indicate that bullying is occurring.
- To instruct their child to "tell" if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied.
- To help their child develop appropriate strategies, in conjunction with the school, to prevent and/or deal with bullying.
- To take ownership of their child's behaviour and acknowledge that their child may be involved in bullying behaviour either as a bully, a victim or an onlooker.
- To inform the school if they suspect that bullying is occurring and be prepared to work with the school to resolve a bullying situation.
- To be familiar with the school's anti-bullying policy and the approach used in dealing with bullying situations.

## **Responsibilities of Students**

- To respect other's emotional and physical well-being.
- To understand that any form of bullying will not be tolerated and that both parents and teachers will be involved in resolving bullying behaviour with both the victim and the bully.
- To recognise the different forms of bullying that can occur.
- To report to an adult any behaviour that is considered threatening to themselves or others.
- To refuse to participate in a bullying situation, either as the perpetrator or as a witness.
- To be familiar with and use the school procedure in dealing with bullying.
- To be able to discourage bullying behaviour.
- To continue to seek assistance if bullying persists.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

We implement the following strategies within the school to prevent bullying.

- **Restorative Practices**

Restorative Practices framework is a process for forming workable and healthy relationships and to find ways restore them when they breakdown. When working through an issue the teacher has a set of questions that she/he asks those involved. The focus is taken off 'blaming' and works on 'how to make things right'.

- **Circle Time**

Circle Time is a structured activity done on a regular basis. The teacher and students sit in a circle and discuss issues that have arisen through the week, learn about feelings, and play games. The purpose of Circle Time is to build a sense of trust within the group, allow each person an opportunity to speak, develop respect and build self esteem.

- **Bounce Back**

Bounce Back is a program that teaches social skills.

- **Assertive Discipline**

The Assertive Discipline Policy is the school discipline policy.