



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Focus College seeks to provide a safe, secure learning environment for all and does not tolerate bullying. All stakeholders are expected to base their behavior on respect for others, regardless of differences in age, status, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is a deliberate attempt to hurt, ridicule, torment, threaten, frighten or intimidate someone. Bullying is the misuse of power by an individual or a group. Bullying can be mental, physical, verbal and/or psychological in nature.

IMPORTANT:

1. The contents of this policy must be addressed in the Grade 8 Life Orientation program by June of each year. Learners joining the school in any other grade are expected to acquaint themselves with the contents of this policy and to ask their Life Orientation teacher, class teacher should they need clarity on any issue contained in it.

2. All forms of bullying should be reported. A learner may report a case of bullying to an educator or SMT. All information will be treated in the strictest confidence.
3. Life Orientation Teachers and SMT will be available to assist both the victim/s and perpetrator/s
4. Records of bullying will be kept on the learner's personal file.
5. Consequences for bullying are listed in the "Discipline system" section of this Code of conduct.
6. Term 1, annual campaign.

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PROTOCOL TO DEAL WITH BULLYING

1. Once the incident of bullying has been reported, the Principal/Deputy Principal will meet with the victim and establish what has transpired. A formal should ideally include the parents of the victim, however if the parents have granted permission, the SMT may meet with the victim on his/her own.
2. This meeting to clarify the events and also to ensure that the victim understands and is comfortable with the action that the school will take in dealing with the matter and to ensure that the victim will not be placed at further risk.
3. The SMT will then meet with the perpetrator to hear his/her side of the story, to address the matter at hand and to ensure that the bullying behavior stops immediately.
4. Should the incident warrant a Disciplinary hearing with the School Management Team (SMT), the matter will be escalated?
5. The parents of the perpetrator will be informed of the allegation and be offered the opportunity to be present at the meeting with the perpetrator.
6. In the event of the allegations of the victim and the explanation of the perpetrator being at odds, the SMT will mediate a meeting of the two parties concerned.
7. The parents of the victim and the perpetrator will be kept always informed of the school's actions and approach, without contravening the confidentiality of personal information regarding either child or family.
8. The School Management Team reserves the right to call conference of the victim's and perpetrator's parents

EXAMPLES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR (Bullying includes but is not limited to):

PHYSICAL BULLYING

- Minor assault which includes prodding, poking, tripping
- Offensive physical gestures
- Deliberate damage to property of others.
- Major assault such as hitting, kicking, pulling hair, scratching, punching, using a weapon of any nature, acting either as a group against an individual or another group.

VERBAL AND WRITTEN BULLYING

- Name-calling, taunting aimed at ridiculing, humiliating or belittling someone, including remarks which can be construed as mocking or offensive to race, disability, Sexual orientation, age, status, appearance, religion or gender.
- Teasing which can be construed as humiliating and/or embarrassing
- Spreading or malicious rumors and false information and rumors which are designed to mock, humiliate, ridicule and/or belittle.
- Sending bullying text messages, notes and/or letters.
- Threatening behavior and intimidation of others.

PSYCHOLOGICAL (SILENT) BULLYING:

- Isolation/ostracizing a learner in any way, rejection by a group of a learner, threatening looks, refusal to work with any learner/s in a group activity.
- Intentional placing a learner /s in an uncomfortable position
- Being a bystander who, in any way, encourages or supports the actions of the bully, without intervening
- Intimidating or threatening another learner in any way to use or borrow their possessions or money.

CYBER BULLYING

- Circulating material which humiliates or embarrasses another via electronic format, posters, photographs, graffiti or other means (e.g. blogging, Facebook, twitter or any other social media site)
- Posting insulting and / or derogatory comments on another's wall, photos, etc. on Facebook, Twitter or any other social media website.
- Stealing passwords from another learner or from a staff member and then impersonating that individual or group in communication with others
- Sending degrading, threatening, pornographic, pictures via internet, email or cellular telephones
- Signing another individual up for email, IM marketing Lists, pornographic sites, etc. without that person's permission
- Internet polling
- Creating websites specifically aimed at socially isolating, maligning, embarrassing, intimidating or threatening someone else.