

## **Harassment and Bullying Prevention Policy.**

Hope Academy is fully committed to ensuring the physical safety and social connectedness of all its students. We are fully committed to providing protection from all forms of bullying, regardless of any student's personal characteristics. We believe that each and every student is wonderfully made in the image of God and inherently deserves to be treated with dignity, respect, and kindness.<sup>1</sup>

Our beliefs are founded upon the Bible and evidenced in our Statement of Faith and Mission Statement. The Bible admonishes against a focus on people's diverse personal characteristics.<sup>2</sup> Rather, Christians are exhorted to recognize and honour each person's inherent dignity and unique God-given gifts.<sup>3</sup> We believe that including specific references to particular personal characteristics does not foster Christian unity and equality, and is detrimental to that goal.

We believe that God's commands to love our neighbour, and to practice patience and kindness towards all people, apply to all people at all times.<sup>4</sup> From the standpoint of loving one's neighbour, personal characteristics are irrelevant, and should therefore not be highlighted or otherwise emphasized.

We believe that all forms of bullying are morally wrong, regardless of the purported basis for that bullying or who is targeted by that bullying.<sup>5</sup> We reject the notion that bullying is only ever caused by personal characteristics of either the bully or the victim. Rather, bullies often refer to personal characteristics as a pretext or excuse for their abusive and sinful behaviour.

We believe that bullying can only be effectively reduced and prevented by addressing the causes of bullying, such as pride, hatred, fear and unkindness. All individuals should be treated with love, kindness, and compassion, regardless of their personal characteristics.<sup>6</sup>

We believe that adopting the Biblical standard of love and kindness, and implementing the Biblical understanding of unity and equality, are the best ways to prevent and eliminate bullying. We are committed to providing a school environment that is safe, caring, orderly and respectful by implementing policies that are consistent with our Mission Statement and Statement of Faith.

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1. Genesis 1:27; Psalm 139:14; Romans 12:10
2. Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11
3. Ephesians 4:1-7; Philippians 2:1-4; I Corinthians 12:4-23
4. Mark 12:31; Luke 10:25-37
5. Leviticus 25:17; 2 Timothy 2:24
6. Zechariah 7:9; Ephesians 4:32; Luke 10:27

## **Definition and Examples of Bullying:**

Bullying is a form of deliberate, repeated, persistent, and/or aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance. The victim has trouble defending him or herself and is helpless against the person or persons who are doing the bullying.

Clearly, bullying is ungodly behaviour. It is sin that goes against God's requirements in the Bible.

Bullying can occur directly (face-to face) or indirectly (behind a person's back). Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological, that is, with the goal of socially isolating the victim.

Examples include:

- Any form of physical violence such as hitting, kicking, spitting;
- Any form of verbal abuse such as name calling, threatening, ridicule;
- Any form of emotional abuse such as ostracism, gossiping, silent treatment;
- Destruction of personal property;
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about others;
- Forcing others to act against their will;
- Any form of verbal or emotional abuse through internet (MSN or email) or via a social network like Facebook, My Space, etc.

## **Policy Statement:**

In accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, bullying will not be tolerated at Hope Academy. It will not be tolerated on school property, at any school related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances when engaging in bullying will have a negative impact on the student, the school climate, or adversely affect a student's ability to learn. It will be unhesitatingly addressed by the staff at Hope Academy. Restorative steps will be taken to elicit repentance, restitution, resolution, forgiveness and reconciliation. The repercussions of bullying behaviour may result in suspension and expulsion according to the Discipline Policy.

## **Hope Academy's Community Roles and Responsibilities:**

All members are responsible for the prevention of bullying. Participation by all members, including the administration, teachers, parents and students will increase the effectiveness of an anti-bullying policy.

### **Role of Administration:**

- Provides vital leadership
- Ensures staff, students and parents are aware of the policy, guidelines and procedures
- Communicates with staff about best practices for reducing bullying in the school.
- Takes cases of bullying seriously and helps to find solutions for all students involved.

### **Role of Teacher:**

- Is a role model in word and deed.

- Reviews Code of Conduct with students regularly.
- Teaches awareness and prevention strategies through the curriculum and other opportunities.
- Is alert to opportunities that serve as a context within which bullies, bystanders and victims can be taught skills and strategies.
- Actively patrols and monitors
- Is observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- Takes steps to help victims and remove sources of distress.
- Reports suspected incidents to the Principal
- Maintains good communication with the home
- Is committed to fully support and participate in the intervention strategies.
- Keeps a personal record of all bullying incidents.

#### **Role of Parent:**

- Should be a role model in word and deed.
- Teaches their child life skills and people skills so they feel confident and competent.
- Teaches their child to defend the weak and timid and to stand up for what is right.
- Takes an active interest in their child's school life, social life, and friends.
- Discusses Student Code of Conduct and other school rules and regulations with their child.
- Watches for signs of victimization or bullying behaviour in their child.
- Informs the school if bullying is suspected.
- Is willing to attend interviews at the school if child is involved in bullying either as a victim, a bully, or a bystander.
- Is willing and available to meet with all parties involved until the conflict is resolved.

#### **Role of Student:**

- Follows the Student Code of Conduct.
- Contributes toward making the school safe
- Creates groups and activities that are inclusive.
- Looks out for the interest of students that are being bullied.
- Courageously confronts the bully, but does not retaliate
- Reports all acts of bullying they may experience or observe to appropriate school personnel.
- Is involved in reconciliation and restoration processes as necessary.

#### **Awareness-raising Strategies:**

It is often a lack of knowledge about bullying that prevents effective anti-bullying practices in the school environment. Therefore, Hope Academy is committed to purposefully and diligently creating awareness among the students, teachers and parents about the nature and forms of bullying. Awareness-raising and prevention strategies will be developed and implemented continually in an ongoing effort to reduce incidences of bullying in the school.

Awareness –raising will be cultivated through the following means:

1. Among the staff: Staff members will address the topic of bullying at staff meetings, during administration days, and by attending workshops, etc. Each staff member will become informed about Hope Academy's anti-bullying policy.

2. Throughout the curriculum: Teachers will consciously and consistently integrate the topic of bullying throughout the school's curriculum of studies as applicable.

### **Prevention Strategies**

Bullying typically increases in situations and environments where adult supervision is lacking or absent. In a school environment, the playground or school bus are two areas where the incidence of bullying is high. At Hope Academy the following prevention strategies are in place to reduce the incidence of bullying in these settings:

On the playground:

1. Clear and consistent playground rules with appropriate consequences for infractions;
2. Adequate patrolling and monitoring at recesses, before and after school;
3. Organized recess activities

On the bus:

1. Clear and consistent bus rules with appropriate consequences for infractions. Hope Academy is committed to identifying other locations where bullying occurs, and proactively putting effective prevention strategies in place as needed.

### **Intervention Strategies:**

When bullying does occur, the school and community are expected to respond in accordance with the principles laid out in Scripture, in a way that is marked by God's grace and redemption in Jesus Christ. The bully, the victim, and the bystander will each be addressed and treated in a way that trains them in the knowledge of God, of His justice and His mercy, and of His unconditional love and grace for all His children.

All cases of bullying will be dealt with according to the Discipline Policy as outlined in the Hope Academy handbook. The purpose of discipline at Hope Academy is to lead and/or train children for life within the covenant, with both its promises and demands and to lead them into maturity and self-discipline.

In cases of bullying, the following procedure will be followed:

1. A Report of Concern/Incident will be filled out by a parent, teacher or student. An investigation will be done by the designated teacher(s) to determine if bullying has occurred. This will be done by meeting separately with the bully, victim and bystanders to gather information.
2. If it is determined by the designated teacher(s) that bullying has occurred as per the definition of bullying as described in the guidelines, a Bullying Incident Report will be filled out, and the parents will be called immediately to inform them of the situation. The designated teacher will seek to reconcile the bully(ies) and the victim(s) and decide on an appropriate punishment with the Principal. The designated teacher(s) will monitor the situation to ensure that the conflict has been resolved. The report will be signed by the Principal and put in the student's OSR.
3. If the conflict has not or cannot be resolved as in Step 2, a meeting will be arranged within 24 hours between the students, the parents, and the designated teacher(s). The offending student will be suspended until the meeting takes place and the issue is resolved with the parents. The

designated teacher and the Principal will decide on an appropriate punishment as per Hope Academy's Discipline Policy.

4. Repentance, restitution, resolution, reconciliation, and reinforcement will be the goal.
5. The designated teacher(s) will meet with the bully and victim two weeks later to determine if progress has been made. The meeting and its results will be recorded on the Bullying Incident Report. If the conflict has been resolved the report will be signed by the Principal and put in the student's OSR.
6. The designated teacher(s) will monitor these students periodically to ensure that the conflict is resolved.

### **Support Strategies**

In the event that a positive outcome is not reached, the administration of Hope Academy will seek extended or external assistance. There are a number of options to consider as befits the circumstances.

1. Provide one on one strategy training for the bully and/or the victim through conflict resolution with the assistance of a capable mentor.
2. Seek assistance from a pastor or council of the local church.
3. Seek professional counselling from an accredited Christian counselling service.

### **Resources and Materials:**

Hope Academy is committed to acquiring a collection of resources and materials to support its anti-bullying policy. Resources will include books, videos/DVDs, websites, etc., as well as anti-bullying curricula. A collection of books suitable for students will be included in the library.

### **Monitoring and Reviewing:**

Hope Academy is committed to monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of its anti-bullying policy. The policy will be reviewed with staff members once a year.

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Appendix A, parts 1 and 2 from ARPA's documents will be added. These are the forms to be filled out in reporting/documentation of incidents.