

# DE LA SALLE HOLY CROSS COLLEGE

## HIGH SCHOOL



### Anti-bullying Policy

The following mission statement for De La Salle Holy Cross College was adopted by staff and parents in 1999: “As a school community with Christ at its center, we staff, parents, Board and church humbly and wholeheartedly embrace the mission of providing a holistic education for the pupils entrusted to us...Each child will be encouraged to be the best person he or she can be and develop a commitment to service of others.”

De La Salle Holy Cross College High School aims to provide a safe and secure environment where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted. We encourage all students to offer one another support in a non-partisan manner and to empathise with others. Bullying behaviour undermines and dilutes the quality of education and imposes psychological damage. As such it is an issue which must be positively addressed through a range of measures and strategies through which all members of the school community are enabled to act effectively in dealing with this behaviour.

#### AIMS OF POLICY

1. To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with staff, students and parents/guardians.
2. To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
3. To outline procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
4. To outline procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
5. To outline a support system for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
6. To work with local agencies in countering forms of bullying behaviour and anti-social behaviour.

#### DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying can be defined as a deliberate hurting of someone through physical, verbal, written, electronically distributed and/or emotional abuse. It involves the intent to hurt, threaten, frighten, injure or intimidate another. The victim is usually powerless, or feels powerless, to do anything about it. The bully may operate alone or s/he may be part of a group that bullies other students. The perpetrator may also victimize many different people. An important characteristic of bullying is that it is sustained over time with the victim being subjected repeatedly to such behaviour. It is important to understand that the bullying involves the misuse of power, is extremely hurtful and is not invited by the victim.

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Note that conflict situations that do not involve an imbalance of powers cannot be classified as bullying. Similarly, being rejected or disliked by another does not constitute bullying, nor does 'overly bossy' behaviour. However, if these situations are not resolved or if they become a pattern, it is possible that they may develop into bullying situations if there is a deliberate or sustained attempt to hurt, cause unhappiness and/or exclude others.

## **TYPES OF BULLYING**

### **1. Physical bullying**

#### 1.1 Physical aggression

This type of behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking and tripping people, threatening someone and preventing someone from leaving an area or room. When boys engage in 'mock fighting', as in 'I was only playing or teasing'; physical harassment may be disguised.

#### 1.2 Damage to property

Personal property may be the focus of attention for a bully; that may result in damage to clothing, school bags, books and other learning material or interference with a student's desk or locker. Personal property may also be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

#### 1.3 Extortion

Demands for money may be made, accompanied by threats in the event of victims not 'paying up'. Victims' lunch monies or lunches may be taken. Victims may also be forced into the theft of money or property for delivery to the perpetrator.

### **2 Non-physical bullying**

#### 2.1 Intimidation

Intimidation is based on the use of aggressive body language, use of the voice or facial expressions. It may come in the form of rude hand gestures, pulling of faces and offensive graffiti.

### **3. Relational bullying**

#### 3.1 Isolation

This form of mistreatment appears when a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all members of a group. It may come in the form of written insults or drawings of the victim or aspects of the victim. Behaviours such as whispering about the student in a loud voice, leaving him or her out of a game or deliberately excluding the victim who is part of a group from social gatherings may form part of this type of victimisation.

#### 3.2 Ruining relationships

This type of bullying behaviour includes gossiping about people, the breaking of confidences and the deliberate splitting of friendships.

### **4. Verbal bullying**

Persistent name calling directed at the same individual, which insults or humiliates, is regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Personal remarks about parents, using accents to mock someone or using distinctive voice characteristics all constitute bullying behaviour as do other labels given which are attributed to physical features, sexuality, gender, age and culture as examples.

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## 5. Sexual harassment

This includes the spread of gossip regarding a sexual issue, making sexual innuendos and jokes, and/or making derogatory comments about someone's appearance.

## 6. Cyber-bullying

This includes the sending of cruel or threatening text messages, WhatsApp messages, emails and messages on all other social media platforms. It includes posting nasty pictures about others in blogs or on websites, making unkind comments about another person in text or instant messages, in mails or chat rooms, taking explicit photographs and sending them on to others and 'stealing' someone's identity to spread rumours or lies about another person.

## PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

### 1. The curriculum

During Life Orientation, Religious Education, workshops, assemblies, conversations with staff members and sessions with a member of the therapy team; students will be educated about the signs and dangers of bullying. Students are taught how to recognise intimidating behaviour, how to respond when made a victim of it, and how to handle bullying incidents that they may observe. Students are encouraged to report any incident or suspected incident of bullying. They are also taught how to identify and correct behaviours that they themselves may exhibit as perpetrators of oppressive behaviour towards others. Conversations are also initiated about those who are bystanders and how to be proactive in their responses to inappropriate behaviours witnessed.

### 2. Teacher awareness and Therapy team

All members of staff are made aware of bullying as an issue. The therapy team is trained to deal with and record these situations and will discuss all incidents or suspected incidents to school management.

### 3. Outside presentations

Speakers are sometimes asked to come and address the issue of bullying to students. On occasion, parents may also be invited to talks about bullying behaviour and how to deal with their children during such times.

## REPORTING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

If a student feels that s/he is being bullied; that person is encouraged to tell a member of the therapy team or a member of school management. If any student is aware that another student in the school is subject to bullying, they should immediately inform one of the above adults.

If any parent is aware that their son/daughter is subject to bullying, they should immediately contact a member of the therapy team or school management and relay the information and evidence to them.

Any evidence of bullying should be kept (text messages, emails and notes, capturing pages on social media and witness accounts). All reports of bullying will be taken seriously, will be investigated thoroughly and feedback will be given.

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## PROCEDURE IN REPORTING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

When an incident of bullying or suspected bullying is reported, the school will respond in a manner that is appropriate to the incident. Depending on the circumstances and nature of the incident, the following procedural guidelines may apply:

1. Student reports incident to therapy team or school management.
2. Parents report incident to therapy team or school management.
3. A written record is kept of what was said or written.
4. The victim is asked to speak about the incident in a confidential space and this information is put on record.
5. The victim is asked if s/he is comfortable with the action that the school will take in dealing with the matter, also ensuring that the victim will not be placed at further risk.
6. The perpetrator of the bullying incident will be interviewed and information will be put on record. A member of the therapy team or member of the school management team will listen to the perpetrator's side of the story with the aim of putting a stop to the bullying behaviour immediately. If it is felt that the perpetrator needs some sort of intervention, this should be arranged in conjunction with the student's parents and/or the school's pastoral care.
7. Any witnesses to the incident are interviewed and information is recorded.
8. In the event that the accounts given by the victim and perpetrator are substantially different, investigating staff will bring both students together for mediation, or will investigate further by interviewing other students who witnessed the incident.
9. In the event that the perpetrator admits to bullying another person, or if there is evidence that there was bullying involved, the parents of the perpetrator will be informed and requested to attend an interview with their child.
10. The issue will be discussed with the guilty party and one or more of the procedures that are described by the Disciplinary Procedures for Learners at De La Salle Holy Cross College will be implemented.
11. Where there is complete denial, no witness, no evidence and whereupon one student's word is against another student's account of the incident, it is difficult to resolve the matter. Here, caution about behaviour is given and the event noted. The 'victim' in this case is encouraged to report any further incident and parents may or may not be contacted by the school.

## CRIMINAL PROCEDURE IN REPORTING HARASSMENT

The Protection from Harassment Act, 2011, states that any person who is being harmed by harassment, as described by Section 1 of the Act, can apply for a protection order against the perpetrator. The Act also states that a child under the age of 18, or a person on behalf of a child, may apply for a protection order. This can be done without the assistance of the child's parents. Added to this, if a person is not able to apply for a protection order for himself, another person who has a real interest in stopping the harassment and the wellbeing of the person experiencing the harassment can apply for a protection order on that person's behalf. This is particularly important in the context of protecting people with certain disabilities, or persons who while not disabled but because of their circumstances incapable of applying for a protection order.

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**ROLE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN**

- Be alert to signs of unhappiness or anxiety in your child's mood.
- Note changes in your child's attitude and school marks as well as avoidance of school or social activities.
- Note loss of concentration, difficulty sleeping, crying, changes in appetite, withdrawal and patterns of physical illness (where not explained by puberty, bereavement, family conflict, or drug use).
- Be aware, in a respectful manner, of the contents of social behaviours and contents posted on electronic sites, via any type of social media communication tools that belong to your child.
- Note that your child may take the role of the perpetrator, victim or witness.
- Be supportive when your child has been involved in any incident of bullying. This may have a long-term damaging effect.
- Encourage your child to retain any possible evidence.
- Speak out if your child is a victim. Perpetrators like silent targets.
- Avoid participating in gossip around the incident or reporting unsubstantiated or third-hand gossip.
- Help your child to learn positive behaviours that will enable him or her not to become a victim.
- Clearly address the situation as a family if you find that your child has been a perpetrator.

Dated 23 May 2016

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## Anti-bullying Policy

NAME OF STUDENT:.....

GRADE:.....

DATE:.....

### ACCEPTANCE OF BULLYING POLICY BY STUDENT AND PARENT/GUARDIAN

We have read the Anti-Bullying Policy, and agree to abide by the principles set out in this document while we are at De La Salle Holy Cross College High School.

We understand that any form of bullying will not be accepted at De La Salle Holy Cross College High School and that the School will view this pattern of behaviour as a serious transgression of the values upheld by the School.

PARENT'S SIGNATURE:.....

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE:.....

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