



WOODSTOCK SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY STUDENT BRIEF

March 2009

I. POLICY STATEMENT

Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. All individuals regardless of their age, culture, challenges, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse. Therefore, bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school.

II. DEFINITION

Bullying is (1) a pattern of behavior that is (2) aggressive, harmful, hurtful, unwanted, distressing or demeaning (3) in a relationship where there is an imbalance of power or strength. All 3 criteria must be present for the behavior to be defined as bullying.

(1) A "pattern of behavior" can be defined in one of three ways:

- 1) a pattern of behavior by a single bully towards a single target;
- 2) a pattern of behavior by a single bully towards different targets, or
- 3) a pattern of behavior towards a targeted individual appropriated by anyone towards that individual. In this case, the pattern has already been established against this target by other offenders, even if appropriated for the first time by this particular offender.

(2) "Aggressive, harmful, hurtful, unwanted, distressing or demeaning" behavior can be direct or indirect.

Examples of Direct Bullying: hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, pushing, grabbing, or pinching; taunting, teasing, racial/cultural slurs or jokes, verbal harassment; comments about body and looks; threatening, obscene gestures; rough behavior.

Examples of Indirect Bullying: getting another person to bully someone for you; negative body language; spreading rumors; deliberately excluding someone from a group or activity; silent treatment; cyber-bullying (e-mail, instant messaging, texting, prank or offensive phone calls, etc.).

(3) "Imbalance of power or strength:" Bullying involves the underlying belief that the bully has the right to exert power and control over a targeted individual or group. Students and staff should be able to say or indicate "No" or "Stop" when they are recipients of any behavior which makes them uncomfortable or puts them at risk. Behavior that continues or is repeated after "No" or "Stop" has been communicated, is unacceptable behavior.

III. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS AND INVESTIGATING REPORTS

All reports of suspected or actual bullying will be taken seriously. All witnesses to suspected bullying must report the incident. Students may report confidentially to any staff member. Alternatively, reports may be submitted to ReportIt@woodstock.ac.in. All staff members are required to forward all reports of suspected or actual bullying by students or staff as defined by the policy to a member of the Counseling Team. Apart from this, staff must maintain confidentiality to protect the targeted and reporting individuals. If the Counseling Team believes that bullying has taken place, then the Head of School must investigate the incident and apply appropriate discipline.

IV. PROTECTION OF WITNESSES AND OF PEOPLE TARGETED BY BULLYING

Immediate measures will be taken to protect students from retaliation. Retaliation by the accused or anyone else will be viewed as an additional act of severe bullying. Targets of bullying will provide input when decisions are made regarding their safety. The school will ensure that witnesses and targets are not alone in places where they do not feel safe.

V. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

All disciplinary actions taken for bullying incidents will be in accordance to the Levels of Offense and Consequences as outlined in the Student Handbook. By definition, bullying is a repeated behavior. Therefore, any bullying incident as defined in this policy will automatically be counted as at least a *level two* offense. Any or all of the sanctions associated with level two offenses may apply. Any repeated level two bullying offense, **an actual physical or sexual assault**, or a **serious threat of physical or sexual assault**, is a *level three* offense. Any or all sanctions associated with level three offenses may apply.