



## **APPENDIX D:** **ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY**

Bells Independent School District is committed to a working and learning environment that is free from any form of bullying and/or harassment. These forms of violence adversely affect the learning environment for students and destroy the overall climate of the school. Any incident of bullying or harassment will be regarded very seriously and may be grounds for disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

#### **What is Bullying?**

It is the willful, conscious behavior which hurts, threatens or frightens someone over a period of time. This behavior is systematic and ongoing. These negative acts are not intentionally provoked by the victims. It takes various forms; each of these forms may be manifested either overtly or subtly:

- **Physical bullying** includes punching, poking, strangling, hair pulling, beating, biting and excessive tickling.
- **Verbal bullying** includes such acts as hurtful name-calling, teasing and gossip.

- **Emotional bullying** includes rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics such as race, disability, ethnicity, or perceived sexual orientation, manipulating friendships, isolating, ostracizing and peer pressure.
- **Sexual bullying** includes many of the actions listed above as well as exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, sexual harassment and abuse involving actual physical contact and sexual assault.
- **Cyber Bullying** includes spreading rumors in chat rooms and posting pictures and or information on the Internet about a particular victim that is unwanted and may or may not be true. This includes inappropriate mobile phone text messages, e-mail, or voice mail.

### **What is Harassment?**

Behavior that is offensive, intimidating or hostile; which interferes with individuals' working or social environment; or which induces stress, anxiety, fear or sickness on the part of the harassed person. Harassment may take many forms and involve more than one individual both as the harasser and the victim.

- **Physical harassment** ranging from touching to serious assault
- **Verbal and written harassment** through jokes, offensive language, gossip and slander, letters, etc.
- **Visual display** of posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, and emblems
- **Intrusion** by pestering, spying, or following someone
- **Bullying** as defined above

### **POLICY AIMS**

- ◆ To ensure that there is a clear procedure to follow which deals with incidents of bullying.
- ◆ To prevent bullying by providing opportunities for discussion by students, teachers and administrators within the educational environment.
- ◆ To ensure that all pupils have access to an adult in school to whom they may talk in confidence, in the knowledge that something will be done immediately and that the matter will be dealt with sensitively and discreetly.
- ◆ To make the unacceptable nature of bullying, and the consequences of any repetition, clear to the bully and his or her parents.

- ◆ To make clear to parents of victims and bullies the actions that are being taken, the reasons for the action and what they, as parents, can do to reinforce those actions.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Students and all district employees have a responsibility to recognize bullying and harassment and take appropriate action in accordance with this policy immediately when they become aware of any such behavior. If at any point during the reported bullying incident, a student violates Bells I.S.D. Student Code of Conduct, disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct will take place along with the following.

### **Stage One**

Unless an incident is of a very serious nature, it will be dealt with initially by the staff member who witnesses the incident or receives the initial report of the incident. This person will document the incident and send a copy of the documentation to the campus administrator. The purpose of this record is:

- to aid memory by recording details of the incident.
- for clarity in assessment of the situation
- to determine a pattern of bullying behavior

The teacher or administrator may deem it necessary to inform the parents at this stage.

### **Stage Two**

A formal, written report will be completed by the following:

- 1) the bully
- 2) the victim
- 3) other parties potentially involved

- 4) the Principal or Counselor
- 5) the staff or faculty member who witnesses the incident if applicable.

The written report will include pertinent information about when and where the incident took place and the writer's perspective of the occurrence. In addition, the report will include ideas for resolving the negative behavior and motivating the bully to move away from the negative behavior.

The Campus Principal will arrange to meet with the parents of the child who is seen to be bullying and with the parents of the victim of the bullying, the campus counselor and any other school personnel who have been key players in the incidences of bullying. The children themselves may be required to attend part or all of these meetings. The written report will include pertinent information about when and where the incident took place and the writer's perspective of the occurrence. In addition, the report will include ideas for resolving the negative behavior and motivating the bully to move away from the negative behavior.

Parents should also be given the opportunity for their input regarding strategies for changing the bullying behavior as well as strategies for the victim in dealing with bullying behaviors. The aim of the meeting is to ensure that everyone understands what needs to take place in order to put a halt to the bullying and provide an appropriate learning environment for students.

### **Stage Three**

It is the duty of the school to provide a safe environment for all the children. Should the above interventions fail and the bullying continue, a program of sanctions will be implemented by the Principal in consultation, if necessary, with the Board of Trustees. These sanctions may include a period of suspension during which there will be on-going consultation with the parents to decide on appropriate action/s to be taken in the best interest of the child

### **TO STUDENTS**

If you are being bullied, or you know that someone else is, please tell a teacher or administrator at once, and it will be dealt with. Not telling means the victim will continue to suffer and the bully will carry on, perhaps bullying others too.

You all have a responsibility to ensure that bullying is not allowed to occur in our school.

## **TO PARENTS**

If you think that your child may be being bullied, or your child tells you that he/she is, please let school officials know immediately. Please reassure your child that school officials will deal with it sensitively but firmly. If school officials become aware that your child is the victim of bullying or that your child is bullying others, we will contact you and will discuss, together, how the situation can be improved. Parental involvement is a crucial factor in our fight against bullying. At the beginning of each school year, all parents are to be given a copy of Student Code of Conduct and anti-bullying policy. Through effective home-school communication efforts, we hope to promote an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding in support of all our children.

## **TO ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS**

Teachers should attempt to use the academic curriculum and character education curriculum as a vehicle to deliver and reinforce our anti-bullying and harassment policy. Assemblies, role-play and drama, literature, discussion-based activities and creative writing all provide opportunities for this.

A survey of all students will be conducted in an attempt to measure the level of bullying and harassment in the school. This will be repeated each year in the hope that a measure of our success in tackling the problem can be gained.

As needed, counselors shall provide parents with a leaflet providing information about bullying behavior and the school's response.

The district's Character Education Plan will serve to reinforce the school's approach to bullying.

Teachers and aides must be regularly made aware of the importance of their role in supervising and monitoring student interactions and, in particular, students who appear to be isolated from their peers or who show signs of distress.

## **EVALUATION OF THE POLICY**

In line with school procedures this policy will be reviewed annually.