



HURT-FREE SCHOOL POLICY

Dr Elizabeth Smit maintains, "Education for peace aims to empower children with skills enabling them to play a positive role in maintaining a peaceful society. A conflict resolution programme such as mediation offers children the opportunity to face their differences and reach their own solutions." Special thanks to Mr Simon Weaver for his input regarding this policy.

RATIONALE

Applewood aims to be a community in which everybody feels valued and safe, where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted. Every boy and girl has the right to enjoy their time at school. Our community does not tolerate bullying or harassment. Respect for others is expected. All members of the school community have the right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

PRINCIPLES

Applewood:

- Expects a high standard of behaviour at all times
- Aims to provide a safe and caring environment for everyone
- Has a policy for detecting, preventing and dealing with bullying
- Is continually educating boys and girls about issues related to bullying behaviour
- Offers support to all children through the class teacher

Rights and Responsibilities

Children have rights at school, but at the same time they have responsibilities, and it is our goal to ensure they understand both their rights as children at school and their responsibilities. We have identified the following rights and responsibilities:

Rights	Responsibilities
To be different	To show respect, compassion and understanding to all
To feel safe	To respect and protect the safety of others
To receive kindness from others	To be kind to others
To learn and grow	To work to the best of their ability
To be respected	To respect others
To be valued	To value others
To relax, play and join in activities	To include everyone in their games and activities

Understanding Bullying and Conflict

In any environment it is important to differentiate between conflict and bullying behaviour. The table below outlines the definitions of the two terms Applewood has accepted.

Part of our responsibility as parents and teachers is to help our children distinguish between the two. By doing so we aim to ease conflict through appropriate mediation skills and to try and eradicate bullying through appropriate intervention.

Bullying	Conflict
Bullying is any repeated behaviour intended to hurt, injure, threaten or frighten another person/group of persons in such a way that they feel that they cannot do anything about it. Bullying is a repeated abuse of power.	Conflict is a dispute or squabble, disagreement or argument normally between parties of equal power. Conflict is normal, healthy and part of our day-to-day interactions.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is the regular and continual act of aggression, causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms; physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion and exclusion. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organised, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups.

Forms of Bullying

- Continual physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another child
- Continually interfering with another child's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it
- Repeated use of offensive names when addressing another child
- Continually teasing or spreading rumours about another child or his/her family
- Continually belittling another child's abilities and achievements
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another child
- Continually excluding another child from a group activity
- Continually ridiculing another child's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms
- Continual forms of micro-aggressions which are everyday, subtle, and often unintentional behaviours or comments that communicate negative attitudes or biases towards individuals from marginalized groups. They can be verbal, nonverbal, or environmental, and they can target any aspect of a person's identity, including their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, ability, or socioeconomic status.
- Repeated misuse of technology (internet or cell phones) to hurt or humiliate another person

Participation and Consultation Process

- Awareness raising programmes (staff, children and parent information meetings)
- Survey/questionnaires distributed to children, parents and whole school staff
- Seeking the views of parents at information evenings
- Monitoring, evaluation and review

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:

- Foster in our children self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others

- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our children
- Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every child learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying
- Provide a safe, child friendly and anonymous way to report bullying behaviour.
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them
- Attend to suspected cases of bullying immediately
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures

The Responsibilities of Children

We expect our children to:

- Have respect for themselves and for others
- Have respect for their own and for the possessions of others
- Show compassion and understanding for others
- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity
- Intervene to protect the child who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances
- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Listening to your child
- Offering advice on how to avoid bullying situations
- Support your son or daughter
- Build your child's self esteem
- Discuss ways to respond if your child's rights are infringed
- Inform the school
- Let the school investigate and report back
- Allow the school to sort it out
- Keep confidentiality
- Set an example
- Helping your children to regulate their emotions by:
 - Teaching your son or daughter to identify what they are feeling
 - Showing them how to contain and deal with the feeling
 - Offering them ways to deal with emotion without affecting others

The Responsibilities of All

Everyone should:

- Work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Classroom Interventions

During the course of the year, classes may be addressed by the class teachers on issues such as self-esteem and friendships. The class teachers will also undertake additional classroom interventions as required.

Counselling

At Applewood we have access to a school counsellor. The appropriate school staff members are there for initial and backup support and for short-term assistance. If a child needs ongoing support, he/she will be referred to a relevant professional.

The Personal Social Emotional Development

In the Pre-Primary, as part of the curriculum, children learn to form positive relationships in their classes that support mutual respect, understanding, and that celebrate and acknowledge differences. Children learn from adults as guides and role models. By sharing emotions and responses during activities, children develop sensitivity to the needs of others. They begin to learn about the value of and need for trust, honesty, support and reliability (the importance of friendships).

Social and Emotional Awareness

In Grades 1 – 7 our children have dedicated lessons called social and emotional awareness. These lessons are designed to deal with a range of age specific, everyday situations that children will need to learn to cope with. The idea is that children discover more about themselves, learn to respect each other's differences and that they learn how to deal with conflict situations.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF HURTFUL BEHAVIOUR

The corrective engagement procedure is to be followed once it has been established that a case of bullying is reported:

- Interview both parties individually and suggest strategies
- Arrange a meeting for all involved
- Explore the problem without allocating blame
- Share responsibility - Focus on resolving the problem
- Identify solutions - Ask for suggestions from the individuals themselves
- Let the individuals take action themselves
- Inform parents of the process followed
- Follow up continually until the problem is resolved
- Communicate, communicate, communicate

It should be noted that if the bullying behaviour continues, more stringent sanctions will be imposed.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

All staff will be supported in continually developing their understanding of bullying and non-violent or peaceful education as well as in developing counselling skills to deal with situations which confront them.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Hurt Free Policy will be reviewed annually on completion of the Hurt Free Survey and the updating of data.