

POLICY NAME: Policy on Child Protection
POLICY NUMBER: 15
DATE OF APPROVAL: 15 September 2016

POLICY CROSS-REFERENCED:

- The Beacon Academy Faculty Handbook
- The Beacon Academy Student & Parent Handbook
- The Beacon Academy Policy No. 8 “Policy and Rules on Anti-Sexual Harassment”
- The Beacon Academy Policy No. 16 “Policy on Anti-Bullying”

REFERENCES:

Revised Manual of Regulations for Private Schools in Basic Education

- Republic Act No. 7610. “The Special Protection for a Child Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act.”
 - DepEd Order No. 040-12. “DepEd Child Protection Policy”
 - Republic Act No. 10627. “Anti-Bullying Act of 2013”
 - Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013
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POLICY STATEMENT

The Beacon Academy, Inc. (“**Academy**”) supports and adopts the zero tolerance policy of the Department of Education against any act of child abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, bullying and other forms of abuse.

The Academy aims to inculcate citizenship, foster love of humanity, respect for human rights, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, develop moral character and personal discipline, encourage critical and creative thinking, broaden scientific and technological knowledge, and promote vocational efficiency. To this end, the Academy shall:

- a. Ensure that the institution remains an environment conducive to learning wherein children shall have the right to education free from fear.
- b. Ensure that all children shall be protected from all forms of abuse and bullying to develop self-esteem and self-confidence.
- c. Advocate a positive and non-violent mode of disciplining children to foster self-discipline and to improve self-esteem.
- d. Take steps to prevent bullying and ensure that the appropriate interventions, counseling, and other services are provided for the victims of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination and bullying.
- e. Inculcate unto all students respect to the rights of others and refrain from committing acts of bullying and peer violence.
- f. Encourage involvement of parents in all school activities or events that raise awareness on children’s rights, positive discipline, and the prevention of bullying; and
- g. Orient visitors and guests on the child protection policy.

POLICY GUIDELINES

1. Definitions

"Violence against children committed in schools" refers to a single act or a series of acts committed by school administrators and/ or personnel against a child, which result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or other abuses including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harassment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty. It includes, but is not limited to, the following acts:

- a. **"Physical violence"** refers to acts that inflict bodily or physical harm. It includes assigning children to perform tasks which are hazardous to their physical well-being.
- b. **"Sexual violence"** refers to acts that are sexual in nature. It includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. Rape, sexual harassment, acts of lasciviousness, making demeaning and sexually suggestive remarks, physically attacking the sexual parts of the victim's body;
 - ii. Forcing the child to watch obscene publications and indecent shows or forcing the child to do indecent sexual acts and/or to engage or be involved in, the creation or distribution of such films, indecent publication or material; and
 - iii. Acts causing or attempting to cause the child to engage in any sexual activity by force, threat of force, physical or other harm or threat of physical or other harm or coercion, or through inducements, gifts or favors.
- c. **"Psychological violence"** refers to acts or omissions causing or likely to cause mental or emotional suffering of the child, such as but not limited to intimidation, harassment, stalking, damage to property, public ridicule or humiliation, deduction or threat of deduction from grade or merit as a form of punishment, and repeated verbal abuse.
- d. Other acts of violence of a physical, sexual or psychological nature that are prejudicial to the best interest of the child.

"Bullying" refers to willful aggressive behavior that is directed, towards a particular victim who may be out-numbered, younger, weak, with disability, less confident, or otherwise vulnerable. It is committed when a student commits an act or a series of acts directed towards another student, or a series of single acts directed towards several students in a school setting or a place of learning, which results in physical and mental abuse, harassment, intimidation, or humiliation. Such acts may consist of any one or more of the following:

- a. Threats to inflict a wrong upon the person, honor or property of the person or on his or her family.
- b. Stalking or constantly following or pursuing a person in his or her daily activities, with unwanted and obsessive attention.
- c. Taking of property.
- d. Public humiliation, or public and malicious imputation of a crime or of a vice or defect, whether real or imaginary, or any act, omission, condition, status, or circumstance tending to cause dishonor, discredit or expose a person to contempt.
- e. Deliberate destruction or defacement of, or damage to the child's property.

- f. Physical violence committed upon a student, which may or may not result to harm or injury, with or without the aid of a weapon. Such violence may be in the form of mauling, hitting, punching, kicking, throwing things at the student, pinching, spanking, or other similar acts.
- g. Demanding or requiring sexual or monetary favors, or exacting money or property, from a pupil or student.
- h. Restraining the liberty and freedom of a pupil or student.

“Cyber-bullying” refers to any conduct defined in the preceding paragraph, as resulting in harassment, intimidation, or humiliation, through electronic means or other technology, such as, but not limited to texting, email, instant messaging, chatting, internet postings, social networking websites or other platforms or formats.

“Social bullying” refers to any deliberate, repetitive and aggressive social behavior intended to hurt others or to belittle another individual or group.

“Gender-based bullying” refers to any act that humiliates or excludes a person on the basis of perceived or actual sexual orientation and gender identity.

"Other acts of abuse by a student" refers to other serious acts of abuse committed by a pupil, student or learner upon another pupil, student or learner of the same school, not falling under the definition of 'bullying' in the preceding provisions, including but not limited to acts of a physical, sexual or psychological nature.

“Corporal punishment” refers to a kind of punishment or penalty imposed for an alleged or actual offense, which is carried out or inflicted, for the purpose of discipline, training or control, by a teacher, school administrator, an adult, or any other child who has been given or has assumed authority or responsibility for punishment or discipline. It includes physical, humiliating or degrading punishment, including, but not limited to the following:

- a. Blows such as, but not limited to, beating, kicking, hitting, slapping, or lashing, of any part of a child’s body, with or without the use of an instrument such as, but not limited to a cane, broom, stick, whip or belt;
- b. Striking a child’s face or head, such being declared as a **“no contact zone”**;
- c. Pulling hair, shaking, twisting joints, cutting or piercing skin, dragging, pushing or throwing of a child;
- d. Forcing a child to perform physically painful or damaging acts such as, but not limited to, holding a weight or weights for an extended period and kneeling on stones, salt, pebbles, or other objectives;
- e. Deprivation of a child’s physical needs as a form of punishment;
- f. Deliberate exposure to fire, ice, water, smoke, sunlight, rain, pepper, alcohol, or forcing the child to swallow substances, dangerous chemicals, and other materials that can cause discomfort or threaten the child’s health, safety and sense of security such as, but not limited to bleach or insecticides, excrement or urine;
- g. Tying up a child;
- h. Confinement, imprisonment or depriving the liberty of a child;

- i. Verbal abuse or assaults, including intimidation or threat of bodily harm, swearing or cursing, ridiculing or denigrating the child;
- j. Forcing a child to wear a sign, to undress or disrobe, or to put on anything that will make a child look or feel foolish, which belittles or humiliates the child in front of others;
- k. Permanent confiscation of personal property of pupils, students or learners, except when such pieces of property pose a danger to the child or to others; and
- l. Other analogous acts.

2. Duties of School Personnel

School administrators, teachers, and other personnel exercise special parental authority and responsibility over the child while under their supervision, instruction and custody. Authority and responsibility shall apply to all authorized activities whether inside or outside the premises of the school, entity or institution. To this end, they shall -

- a. Keep students in their company and support, educate and instruct them by right precept and good example;
- b. Give them love and affection, advice and counsel, companionship and understanding;
- c. Enhance, protect, preserve and maintain their physical and mental health at all times;
- d. Furnish them with good and wholesome educational materials, supervise their activities, recreation and association with others, protect them from bad company and prevent them from acquiring habits detrimental to their health, studies and morals;
- e. Represent them in all matters affecting their interests;
- f. Inculcate the value of respect and obedience;
- g. Practice positive and non-violent discipline, as may be required under the circumstances; provided, that in no case shall corporal punishment be inflicted upon them; and
- h. Perform such other duties as are imposed by law upon them, as substitute parents or guardians.

3. Duties of Students

Students shall have the following duties and responsibilities—

- a. Comply with the Academy's regulations, as long as they are in harmony with their best interests. Students and learners shall refrain from:
 - i. Engaging in discrimination, or leading a group of pupils or students to discriminate another, with reference to one's physical appearance, weaknesses and status of any sort;
 - ii. Doing any act that is inappropriate or sexually provocative;
 - iii. Participating in behavior of other students that is illegal, unsafe or abusive;

- iv. Marking or damaging school property, including books, in any way;
- v. Engaging in fights or any aggressive behavior;
- vi. Introducing into the school premises or otherwise possessing prohibited articles, such as deadly weapons, drugs, alcohol, toxic and noxious substances, cigarettes and pornographic material; and
- vii. Performing other similar acts that cause damage or injury to another.

An allegation that any of these acts has been committed shall not be used to curtail the child's basic rights.

- b. Conduct themselves in accordance with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities, with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other persons;
- c. Respect another person's rights regardless of opinion, status, gender, ethnicity, religion, as well as everyone's moral and physical integrity; and
- d. Observe the proper code of behavior for students as stipulated in the The Beacon Academy Student-Parent Handbook.

4. Establishment of the Child Protection Committee

The Academy hereby establishes the Child Protection Committee, which shall be composed to the following individuals:

- a. Head of School or designated representative - Chairperson
- b. Guidance Counselor/ Teacher - Vice Chairperson
- c. Representative of the Teachers, as designated by the Faculty members
- d. Representative of the Parents, as designated by the Academy
- e. Representative of the Students, as designated by the Beacon Academy Student Council

The Child Protection Committee will perform the following functions:

- a. Initiate information dissemination programs and organize activities for the protection of children from abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination and bullying or peer abuse;
- b. Develop and implement a school-based referral and monitoring system;
- c. Establish a system for identifying students who may be suffering from significant harm based on any physical, emotional or behavioral signs;
- d. Identify, refer and, if appropriate, report to the appropriate offices cases involving child abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination and bullying;
- e. Give assistance to parents or guardians, whenever necessary in securing expert guidance counseling from the appropriate offices or institutions;

- f. Coordinate closely with the Women and Child Protection Desks of the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Local Social Welfare and Development Office (LSWDO), other government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as may be appropriate;
- g. Monitor the implementation of positive measures and effective procedures in providing the necessary support for the child and for those who care for the child;
- h. Ensure that the children's right to be heard are respected and upheld in all matters and procedures affecting their welfare; and
- i. Other functions and duties as the Academy may designate or determine.

5. Procedures in Handling Bullying Incidents

A complaint for bullying shall be acted upon by the Academy in accordance with the procedures outlined in Policy 16: Policy on Anti-Bullying.

6. Other Acts of Violence or Abuse

The conduct of investigation and reporting of cases of child abuse, exploitation, violence or discrimination, shall be done expeditiously, as herein provided.

A complaint for child abuse, violence, exploitation or discrimination shall be filed with the Head of School or the Child Protection Committee and shall be acted upon pursuant to the Academy's rules of procedures on administrative cases. The penalty shall be that which is provided by the rules of the school, subject to the requirements of due process.

The administrative case shall be without prejudice to any civil or criminal case that may be filed.

7. Referral and Counseling

Aside from imposing a disciplinary measure commensurate to the action of the student, a necessary counseling shall be accorded to the students since the school's purpose is not to convict the students but to assist him/her to realize his/her misbehavior. The parent or guardian may be invited to take part in counseling process or session if necessary, depending on the determination or discretion of the Guidance Counselor.

After the series of sessions, follow-ups shall be done by the Guidance Office to monitor the improvement happens towards the behavior of the child. Consistent communication and coordination by the Guidance Counselor with the adviser and parent shall also be made to get feedback based on the result of observation about the child's behavior.

POLICY REVIEW

This Policy on Child Protection will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees every five (5) years.