

**POLICY NAME:** Policy on Anti-Bullying  
**POLICY NUMBER:** 16  
**DATE OF APPROVAL:** 15 September 2016

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**POLICY CROSS-REFERENCED:**

The Beacon Academy Faculty Handbook  
The Beacon Academy Student & Parent Handbook  
The Beacon Academy Policy No. 15 “Policy on Child Protection”

**REFERENCES:**

Revised Manual of Regulations for Private Schools in Basic Education  
Republic Act No. 10627. “Anti-Bullying Act of 2013”  
Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013  
DepEd Order No. 040-12, “DepEd Child Protection Policy”

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**POLICY STATEMENT**

The Beacon Academy, Inc. (“**Academy**”) aims to build a community characterized by respect, tolerance, civility and generosity towards others. While the Academy is aware that there may be instances when students might encounter problems in their relation with their peers, it is also cognizant of the possible or serious repercussions/effects of bullying on young people.

As such, the Academy adopts the policies of the State, as prescribed in the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 and the DepED Child Protection Policy, with the objective of eliminating all instances of bullying. By the inclusion of this policy in the official Student-Parent Handbook and the process involving students, parents, guardians, faculty and staff and other sectors of the Academy community, the Academy aims to implement preventive policies and guidelines to eradicate bullying.

**POLICY GUIDELINES**

**1. Definition of Bullying**

The Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 defines “**bullying**” as any severe or repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another student that has the effect of actually causing or placing the latter in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm or damage to his property; creating a hostile environment at school for the other student; infringing on the rights of the other student at school; or materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school; such as, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Any unwanted physical contact between the bully and the victim like punching, pushing, shoving, kicking, slapping, tickling, headlocks, inflicting school pranks, teasing, fighting and the use of available objects as weapons;
- b. Any act that causes damage to a victim’s psyche and/or emotional well-being;
- c. Any slanderous statement or accusation that causes the victim undue emotional distress like directing foul language or profanity at the target, name-calling, tormenting and commenting negatively on victim’s looks, clothes and body; and

- d. Cyber-bullying or any bullying done through the use of technology or any electronic means.

Further, DepEd Order No. 040-12 defines “bullying” or “**peer abuse**” as a willful aggressive behavior that is directed towards a particular victim who may be out-numbered, younger, weak, with disability, less confident, or otherwise vulnerable. More particularly:

- a. “**Bullying**” is committed when a student commits an act or 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:
  - i. Threats to inflict a wrong upon the person, honor or property of the person or on his or her family;
  - ii. Stalking or constantly following or pursuing a person in his or her daily activities, with unwanted and obsessive attention;
  - iii. Taking property;
  - iv. Public humiliation, or public 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;
  - v. Deliberate destruction or defacement of or damage to the child’s property;
  - vi. Physical violence committed upon a students 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;
  - vii. Demanding or requiring sexual or monetary favor or extracting money or property, from a pupil or students; and
  - viii. Restraining the liberty and freedom of a pupil or student.
- b. “**Cyber-bullying**” is 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.

The term “**bullying**” will also include:

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

## 2. Prohibited Acts

The Academy prohibits the following acts:

- a. Bullying at the following:
  - i. Academy grounds;
  - ii. Property immediately adjacent to Academy grounds;
  - iii. Academy-sponsored or Academy-related activities, functions or programs, whether on or off Academy grounds;
  - iv. Academy bus stops;
  - v. Academy buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the Academy; and
  - vi. Privily-owned school buses for school transportation services that are accredited by the Academy.
- b. Bullying at the location, activity, function or program that is not Academy-related and through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Academy if the act or acts in question create a hostile environment at the Academy for the victim, infringe on the rights of the victim at Academy, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of the Academy;
- c. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, who provides information during an investigation of bullying, or who is witness to or has reliable information about bullying; and
- d. Making a false accusation of bullying, if proven with a preponderance of evidence, may merit the same sanction as bullying.

### **3. Prevention Program**

The Academy will adopt bullying prevention programs, which will be applicable to all students, regardless of level of risk or vulnerability to bullying. Said programs will be comprehensive, multi-faceted and will involve all education stakeholders and personnel.

The bullying prevention programs may contain among others:

- a. Academy-wide initiatives centered on:
  - i. Fostering a positive school climate and environment conducive to the attainment of learning objectives, the development of healthy relationships and the understanding of and respect for individual differences;
  - ii. Periodic assessment and monitoring of the nature, extent, and perceptions of bullying behaviors and attitudes of students;
  - iii. Periodic review and enhancement of the students' and personnel's manual or code of conduct in relation to bullying;
  - iv. Conduct of activities for students, Academy personnel and service providers on how to recognize and respond to bullying;

- v. Continuing personnel development to sustain bullying prevention programs; and
  - vi. Coordination with Local Government Units, the *barangay* (Barangay Council for the Protection of Children) and/or other education stakeholders.
- b. Classroom-level initiatives that focus on:
- i. Reinforcing Academy-wide rules pertaining to bullying;
  - ii. Building a positive sense of self and interpersonal relationships through the development of self-awareness and self-management, interpersonal skills and empathy, and responsible decision-making and problem-solving;
  - iii. Discussion of issues related to bullying, and strategies for responding to and reporting of incidents of bullying;
  - iv. Teaching positive online behavior and safety and how to recognize and report cyber-bullying; and
  - v. Providing an inclusive and caring learning environment for students.
- c. Parent initiatives in bullying prevention activities, such as:
- i. Discussions of the anti-bullying policy of the school, emphasizing bullying prevention during Parents-Teachers Association meetings and seminars; and
  - ii. Conducting or sponsoring education sessions for parents to learn, teach, model, and reinforce positive social and emotional skills to their children.
- d. Monitoring students who are vulnerable to committing aggressive acts or who are perpetrators of bullying, or who are possible targets or victims, for the purpose of early intervention. This activity will be conducted with utmost confidentiality and respect for all parties concerned.

#### 4. Intervention Program

The Academy will adopt intervention programs to promote the continuity of comprehensive anti-bullying policies.

“**Intervention**” refers to a series of activities which are designed to address the following:

- a. Issues that influence the student to commit bullying;
- b. Factors that make a student a target of bullying; and
- c. Effects of bullying.

Interventions may include programs such as counseling, life skills training, education, and other activities that will enhance the psychological, emotional and psycho-social well-being of both the victim and the bully. Such programs may:

- a. Involve activities that will address acts of bullying;

- b. Emphasize formative and corrective measures rather than punishment;
- c. Conform to principles of child protection and positive and non-violent discipline;
- d. Help the victim, the bully, and the bystanders understand the bullying incident and its negative consequences; and
- e. Provide opportunities to practice pro-social behavior.

The intervention strategies of the Academy will involve all parties, such as bullies, victims, bystanders, parents, school personnel, service providers and all other persons who may be affected by the bullying incident.

## **5. Child Protection Committee**

The Child Protection Committee, which the Academy created pursuant to the DepED Child Protection Policy and the Beacon Academy Policy on Child Protection, shall also be the committee that will handle cases of bullying at the Academy.

As stated in the Beacon Academy Policy on Child Protection, the Child Protection Committee shall be composed of 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

In addition to its duties and responsibilities as provided under the DepEd Child Protection Policy and Beacon Academy Policy on Child Protection, the Child Protection Committee shall perform the following tasks:

- a. Conduct awareness-raising programs with the stakeholders of the Academy in preventing and addressing bullying;
- b. Ensure the implementation of this Policy on Anti-Bullying;
- c. Monitor all cases or incidents related to bullying; and
- d. Make the necessary referrals to appropriate agencies, offices or persons, as may be required by the circumstances.

## **6. Procedures in Handling Bullying Incidence**

- a. Immediate Response
  - i. The victim or anyone who witnesses or has personal knowledge of a bullying incident shall immediately call the attention of any school personnel;

- ii. The school personnel who was notified of a bullying incident shall intervene, by:
  - (a) Stopping the bullying immediately;
  - (b) Separating the students involved;
  - (c) Removing the victim or, in appropriate cases, the suspected bully, from the site;
  - (d) Ensuring the victim's safety by determining and addressing the victim's immediate safety needs, ensuring medical attention, if needed, and securing a medical certificate, in cases of physical injury; and
  - (e) Bringing the suspected bully to the Guidance Office or the designated school personnel.
  
- b. Reporting an Incidence of Bullying
  - i. Any member of the school administration, faculty, student, parent or guardian who receives information of a bullying incident, or any person, who witnesses or has personal knowledge of any incident of bullying, shall report the same to the to the Head of School or to any member of the Child Protection Committee;
  - ii. The Child Protection Committee shall accomplish the appropriate report on the bullying incident;
  - iii. The Child Protection Committee shall inform the parents or guardian of the victim and the suspected bully about the incident;
  - iv. If an incident of bullying involves students from more than one school, the school that was first informed of the bullying shall promptly notify the appropriate administrator or school head of the other school so that both schools may take appropriate action; and
  - v. Reports of incidents of bullying initiated by persons who prefer anonymity shall be entertained, and the person who reported the incident shall be afforded protection from possible retaliation, provided, however, that no disciplinary administrative action shall be taken against a suspected bully solely on the basis of an anonymous report and without any other evidence.
  
- c. Fact-finding and Documentation

The Child Protection Committee shall:

  - i. Separately interview in private the victim and the bully, in the presence of their respective parents or guardian;
  - ii. Determine the levels of threats and develop intervention strategies; if the bullying incident or the situation the requires immediate attention or intervention, or the level of threat is high, appropriate action shall be taken by the school within twenty-four hours (24) from the time of the incident;
  - iii. Inform the victim and his/her parents or guardian of the steps to be taken to prevent any further acts of bullying; and
  - iv. Make appropriate determinations for interventions, referrals and monitoring.

d. Intervention

The Child Protection Committee shall determine the appropriate intervention programs for the victim, the suspected bully and bystanders.

e. Referral

The Child Protection Committee may:

- i. Refer the victim and suspected bully to trained professionals outside the school, such as social workers, guidance counselors, psychologists, or child protection specialists, for further assessment and appropriate intervention measures, as may be necessary; and
- ii. Notify the Women and Children's Protection Desk of the Philippine National Police, if there is reason to believe that appropriate criminal charges may be pursued against the suspected bully or offending student.

## 7. Disciplinary Measures

As provided under the Revised Manual of Regulations for Private Schools in Basic Education (Section 134), "a teaching personnel or school official, in the exercise of his right as a substitute parent in relation to his students shall have the authority to impose appropriate and reasonable disciplinary measures in the interests of good order and discipline in case of minor offenses committed in his presence. When the offense committed is serious, the teaching personnel or school officials shall submit a report concerning the violation to the school head who may cause the institution to appropriate disciplinary action against the erring student, if warranted by the circumstances of the case."

At the Academy, all incidences of bullying and the making of false accusations of bullying are considered Major Infractions, even for if committed for the first (1<sup>st</sup>) time, and will follow the procedural due process for Major Infractions.

**"Major Infractions"** are serious violations of school principles and regulations, on the school premises or during any school-sponsored or school-sanctioned activity or event. These include, but are not limited to:

- a. Habitual neglect of responsibilities;
- b. Breach of the Beacon Academy Academic Honesty Policy, or Technology Use Agreement;
- c. Sale, distribution, use and/or possession of alcohol, drugs, tobacco or other illegal substances;
- d. Bullying (physical, mental, verbal, cyber bullying);
- e. Fighting and any physical altercation;
- f. Willful destruction of property;
- g. Theft; or

- h. Possession and/or use of weapons on campus or during school sponsored events or activities.

Major Infractions may merit a Stage 3 or Stage 4 response.

- a. Stage 3: Dean's Warning. When the Dean of Students, in consultation with the teachers and adviser, decides that a student needs a revision in attitude and behavior, the student will be placed on Dean's Warning. Students will receive coaching on improving their attitude and will be assigned to one or more Mandatory Supervised Study Hall sessions. The student will sign a Dean's Warning contract documenting the situation and the plan of action. The student, the parents, and the adviser will receive a copy of this contract and a copy will be filed in the student's school records.
- b. Stage 4: Referral to the Head of School. The breaching of conditions set forth in the Dean's Warning contract, or a serious infraction of school rules and regulations, merits referral to the Head of School. Inquiry and due process will follow and documented, with the appropriate communication between parent and school made. If, upon inquiry and due process, the severity of the infraction is determined, this may merit the forfeiture of certain rights afforded to the student by enrolling in the school, and may result in the following measures:

- i. In-School Restriction

This means that the student will spend the school day completing class work assigned by the teachers, while being removed from the regular classroom and social setting, including all after school activities and special events for a determined period. The student will be supervised by a member of the academic staff and, if applicable, scheduled summative examinations will be given during the period. Parents will be notified in writing of an in-school suspension decision.

- ii. Out of School Suspension

As provided by the Revised Manual of Regulations for Private Schools in Basic Education (Section 136a), "suspension is a penalty in which the school is allowed to deny or deprive an erring pupil or student of attendance in class for a period not exceeding twenty percent (20%) of the prescribed class days for the school year or term." A suspension is considered one step away from permanent separation from the Academy.

While at home during an out of school suspension, the student is expected to do his or her best to keep up with academic work. It is important to note that absences due to out of school suspension are counted towards the maximum number of allowable absences per term and will not relieve or excuse the student of his/her responsibility in keeping up with missed lessons, assignments and examinations. During a suspension period, the student should be assisted by the parents/guardians in coping with the lessons. If there is a scheduled summative examination during the suspension, the school is obliged to give him or her a make-up exam.

It is understood that, upon his or her return to school, the student is expected to be on his or her best behavior going forward, and that a repeat of the behavior that earned the suspension will likely lead to permanent separation from the school.

- iii. Preventive Suspension

As provided by the Revised Manual of Regulations for Private Schools in Basic Education (Section 136b), “a pupil or student under investigation of a case involving the penalty of expulsion may be preventively suspended from entering the school premises if the evidence of guilt is strong and the school head is morally convinced that the continued stay of the pupil or student during the period of investigation constitutes a distraction to the normal operations of the school or poses a risk or danger to the life of persons and property in the school.”

Thus, when a student’s behavior or demeanor is determined to pose an immediate danger to the school community, the student will be removed from class or school. In these circumstances, no warning will be given or exception granted. The safety and security of the majority will prevail. Parents will be immediately notified either by phone or in writing. Following such an action, the parents and students must attend a disciplinary meeting with the Head of School and the Dean of Students as soon as possible after the event.

#### iv. Withdrawal or Exclusion

As provided by the Revised Manual of Regulations for Private Schools in Basic Education (Section 136c), “exclusion is a penalty in which the school is allowed to exclude or drop the name of the erring pupil or student from the school rolls for being undesirable, and transfer credentials immediately issued.”

Where a pattern of unacceptable behavior persists after repeated intervention, it may be necessary for the Head of School, in consultation with the Dean of Faculty and the Dean of Students, to recommend withdrawal of the student from the school or his or her exclusion from the school rolls. This may also be recommended if the student is found to be in possession of firearms and/or possession, sale or use of drugs or illegal substances on campus.”

#### v. Expulsion

As provided by the Revised Manual of Regulations for Private Schools in Basic Education (Section 136d,e), “expulsion is an extreme penalty on an erring pupil or student consisting of his exclusion from admission to any public or private school in the Philippines and which requires the prior approval of the Secretary [of the Department of Education.] The penalty may be imposed for acts or offenses constituting gross misconduct, dishonesty, hazing, carrying deadly weapons, immorality, selling and/or possession of prohibited drugs such as marijuana, drug dependency, drunkenness, hooliganism, vandalism, and other serious school offenses such as assaulting a pupil or student or school personnel, instigating or leading illegal strikes or similar concerted activities resulting in the stoppage of classes, preventing or threatening any pupil or student or school personnel from entering the school premises or attending classes or discharging their duties, forging or tampering with school records or school forms, and securing or using forged school records, forms and documents.”

## **8. Procedural Due Process for Investigations of Bullying**

The following will constitute the minimum due process in investigations of bullying:

- a. Any member of the Academy may trigger an investigation or inquiry into a suspected incidence of bullying;
- b. Upon the filing of a complaint or upon notice of any bullying or peer abuse incident, Child Protection Committee shall inform the parents or guardian of the victim and the suspected bully of such incident in writing and in a meeting called for such purpose;
- c. The suspected bully, through his/her parents or guardian, will be informed of the evidence against him/her;
- d. The suspected bully, through his/her parents or guardian, will be given sufficient time to answer the charges in writing, explaining the circumstances of the alleged infraction;
- e. The suspected bully, through his/her parents or guardian, will have the right to adduce evidence as presented and to present witnesses on his/her behalf;
- f. The Child Protection Committee will evaluate the evidence submitted, decide on the case, and determine the type of infraction and corresponding disciplinary action. All decisions of the Child Protection Committee will be made in writing and duly served upon the victim, suspected bully, and their respective parents or guardian. The decision of the Child Protection Committee shall be final.
- g. The suspected bully may, at any stage, appear or respond with an assistance of counsel.

## **9. Confidentiality**

Any information relating to the identity and personal circumstances of the bully, victim, or bystander shall be treated with utmost confidentiality by the Child Protection Committee and the school personnel, provided, that the names may only be available to the Head of School, teacher or guidance counselor designated by the Head of School, and parents or guardians of students who are or have been victims of bullying or retaliation.

Any school personnel who commits a breach of confidentiality shall be subject to appropriate administrative disciplinary action in accordance with the existing rules and regulations of the Department of Education or the Academy, without prejudice to any civil or criminal action.

## **10. Referral and Counseling**

Aside from imposing a disciplinary measure commensurate to the misconduct of the student, necessary counseling will be accorded to such student since the Academy's purpose is not to penalize students but to assist them in the development of appropriate behavior. The referral will be coming from the Dean of Students before and after the students is subjected to disciplinary action. The parents or guardian can also 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 will still 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 will also be made to get feedback based on the result of observation about the child's behavior.

The victim will also be referred to counseling so that the sense of safety may be restored and his/her need for protection be assessed.

## **11. Education and Communication**

Once a year, or as often as the Head of School deems appropriate, the Academy will organize the proper forum for the purpose of:

- a. Educating the students on the dynamics of bullying, the anti-bullying policies of the Academy, as well as the mechanisms of the Academy for the anonymous reporting of acts of bullying; and
- b. Educating the parents and guardians about the dynamics of bullying, the anti-bullying policies of the Academy and how such parents and guardians can provide support and reinforce such policies at home.

The Academy shall also provide students and their parents or guardians a copy of this Anti-Bullying Policy. This Anti-Bullying Policy will likewise be included in the student and/or employee handbook and shall be conspicuously posted on the school walls and website.

By involving students, parents or guardians, faculty and staff and other sectors of the school community, the Academy aims to implement preventive policies and guidelines to eradicate bullying.

## **12. Reporting**

The Academy will maintain a public record of relevant information and statistics on acts of bullying; provided, that the names of students who committed acts of bullying will be strictly confidential and only made available to the administration, teachers directly responsible for the said students and parents or guardians of students who are or have been victims of acts of bullying.

The Academy will inform the school division superintendent, in writing, about its anti-bullying policies.

Every first week of the start of the school year, the Academy will submit to the school division superintendents a report on all relevant information and statistics on acts of bullying.

## **POLICY REVIEW**

This Policy on Anti-Bullying will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees every five (5) years.