



PRETORIA BOYS HIGH SCHOOL
POLICY FOR THE CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING FORM

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1. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objective of this policy is to outline the purpose, scope and implementation of the confidential reporting form at Pretoria Boys High School (PBHS). The relevant definitions will be followed by an explanation of the purpose of having such an avenue of reporting in the PBHS context. Benefits, limitations and ethical considerations guiding the implementation of this reporting form will be highlighted thereafter. Lastly, the parties that manage or play a role in its implementation at PBHS will be outlined.

2. DEFINITIONS

Concept	Meaning
The Confidential Reporting Form	A reporting form, using the Google Forms platform, that provides the pupils of PBHS an avenue to report events or experiences in their own time and using a technology with which many of them are comfortable. Reporting can be for boys themselves or on behalf of another PBHS pupil. Reporting opens a communication channel between a school representative and the reporter to mobilise support, investigation or awareness.
Confidential Reporting	Confidential reporting describes an act of reporting information where the content of the report and identity of the reporter is subject to the Health Professions Council of South Africa's (HPCSA) confidentiality guidelines for the profession of psychology.
The Reporter	Any PBHS pupil will be able to use this avenue to report experiences, events or concerns. The Google platform will be used to implement the form, using each boys PBHS email address and making the form available on their Google Drive linked to this email address.
Support, investigation and awareness	Reporting can lead to three processes or actions, namely support, investigation or awareness functions.

	<p>Support in this context is the act of connecting a reporter to the available and relevant supportive structure at PBHS or suggesting external support service providers.</p> <p>Investigation refers to the school taking steps to gather further information or identify culprits related to a specific incident reported.</p> <p>Awareness refers to the identification of behavioural patterns in the school currently, resulting in the development of community interventions or immediate action in case of serious harm to the school community.</p>
Recipient of a Report	The Psychology Department will receive all initial reports. If a report indicates that support is needed, the psychologists will manage the report and mobilise the appropriate support structure within or outside the school. If the report indicates investigation or aims to raise awareness of behaviour in the school, the report will be referred to an appropriate senior management staff member to manage.
Illegal activity	Illegal activity is conduct that is considered to be unlawful and in contravention of the laws/constitution of the Republic of South Africa.
Illicit substance use	Illicit substance use is the act of using an illegal substance. This may include the use of regulated substances by a minor such as alcohol and nicotine, or the use of illegal substances, such as psychoactive substances. The use/misuse of these substances may interfere with a person's daily functioning/life or could lead to detrimental circumstances for that person.
Abuse	Abuse is the improper treatment of a person, often to unfairly or improperly gain benefit/as part of acts of power. Abuse can come in many forms, such as physical or verbal maltreatment, injury, assault, violation, sexual, unjust practices, crimes, or other types

	<p>of aggression. According to the Children’s Act, 38 of 2005, adults are legally bound to report child abuse.</p>
Sexual activity and harassment	<p>Concerns about any form of sexual activity occurring between people (with or without consent). This can include sexting which is the sending or receiving of sexually explicit pictures of yourself or others. Illegal sexual activity includes sexual acts that are in contravention of existing laws and statutes. Illegal sexual activity may be reported to the relevant authorities for investigation in an attempt to act in the best interest of the pupil.</p> <p>Harassment can include flirting, derogatory comments or actions that make the individuals feel uncomfortable.</p>
Bullying	<p>According to the School Safety Framework Addressing Bullying in Schools, bullying “involves repeatedly picking on someone with the aim of hurting or harming them physically, emotionally or socially” (School Safety Framework Addressing Bullying in Schools, 2012). Bullying can occur in real life or in cyber domains. It usually involves an imbalance of power and does not include a mutual understanding between equal individuals.</p>
Harmful activities	<p>This includes any activity where you or someone you know is getting hurt or may get hurt. Harmful activities may include but are not restricted to activities involving weapons (e.g. knives), choking games, physical fights/attacks, humiliating or harmful initiation practices, etc.</p>
Discrimination	<p>Prejudicing, discriminating, marginalising or antagonizing someone because of their race, gender, religion or other difference.</p>

Teacher/staff/ management related misconduct	A staff member (teachers, coaches, management or any other staff member) behaving in an inappropriate way that could negatively impact pupils attending PBHS. This can include racism, discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying, abuse, etc.
Family Difficulties (not classified as abuse)	Family difficulties refer to any and all of the following: a) Family conflict, b) change in family circumstance, c) financial problems, d) occupational-related stress or job loss, e) addiction, f) divorce/separation, g) mental health problems, h) illness and i) other - concerns that do not include abuse.
Depression	A mental health disorder characterised by a persistently low or depressed mood most of the time, or loss of interest in activities, causing significant impairment in overall activity and daily life.
Self-harm/self- injury	Self-harm or self-injury is the act of deliberately inflicting pain or injury to one's own body. This can include cutting, burning, scratching, starvation, intentionally throwing up, consuming toxic amounts of alcohol or drugs, or deliberately participating in unsafe sex. Professionals are legally bound to report harmful behaviour, and therefore anonymity of the reporter will not be protected in order to promote safety for all parties involved.
Suicidal behaviour (suicidal ideation or suicide attempt)	<p>Suicidal ideation, also known as suicidal thoughts, is thinking about, considering, or planning suicide. The range of suicidal ideation varies from fleeting thoughts to extensive thoughts and detailed planning.</p> <p>A suicide attempt is when someone harms themselves with the intent to end their life, but they do not die as a result of their actions. It refers to a physical and actual attempt to end one's life.</p> <p>Health professionals or educators are legally bound to report suicidal behaviour to a primary caregiver that can ensure safety and monitoring during this time.</p>

3. PURPOSE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING FORM

PBHS intends to act in the best interest of all its pupils. The use of the confidential reporting form offers PBHS pupils the avenue of reporting concerns about themselves or others in a discreet manner using technology that is familiar/comfortable for them.

Confidential reports will be used to either gain support, request investigation and/or promote awareness of behaviour relevant to the school. The above will be based on the nature of the report, the wishes or expectations of the reporter, and the recipient's scope and purpose within the school.

Each function is briefly discussed below:

a. Supportive Function

When a report is emotional or psychological nature, the report will be allocated to the psychology department at PBHS. Therefore, the response will be in the form of a supportive service that will be offered. Therapeutic support will not be engaged in using email, but all support options and structures will be communicated to the pupil whom will be able to decide which options suits their needs.

b. Investigative Function

When a report falls within one of the categories included below, it will be responded to and investigated by school management. The response by PBHS taken is an investigative reaction to solve a potential problem/incident identified in the report. The investigative function may lead to a disciplinary process where there might be a potential consequence and/or punishment after an investigation.

These reports include 1) behavioural and disciplinary concerns, 2) bullying and victimization concerns, 3) discrimination, racism, or xenophobia concerns, 4) illicit substance use concerns, 5) illegal behaviour, and 6) reports of teacher behaviours.

c. Awareness Function

When a report's content and wishes of a reporter is to promote awareness of patterns of behaviour within the school, the response to the report will then automatically be community-based and can be addressed in a public forum. Examples of awareness-based reports could include drug use, a prominent drug, increase in illegal or concerning behaviours, concerns relating to a specific public place and/or concerns about a specific age group within the school. Community interventions can include psycho-educational workshops, public speakers or assembly topics. General community-based action can also be taken to address the known patterns within the school, such as monitoring for a specific type of drug known to be on the property.

Benefits of implementing the confidential reporting form:

1. Comfortable and discreet avenue for PBHS pupils to report significant concerns.
2. Starts a confidential conversation with a school representative that considers and respects the reporter's expectations and wishes of the report.
3. The school has the opportunity to become aware of patterns of concern in the school and can timeously take the initiative to deal with these issues.
4. Access to this avenue of reporting is only for PBHS pupils, limiting external parties to report or possibly target PBHS pupils in their reports.
5. Legal or ethical dilemmas can best be circumnavigated by making this reporting avenue confidential rather than anonymous, resulting in an increased ability for staff to act according to the *Health Professions Act, 56 of 1974 (HPA)*, the *Children's Act, 38 of 2005* and/or *Annexure 12 - Rules of Conduct Pertaining Specifically to The Profession of Psychology*.
6. According to the above legislation, the school has the ability to act in the best interest of the child in the event of an emergency.

Limitations of implementing the confidential reporting form:

1. Time

- a. Communication using technology is an asynchronous process and does not always allow for immediate support by a school representative.
- b. The effectiveness of the application is dependent on the responsiveness of the role-players, including the reporter, the responder and external investigators if the case is escalated to external organisations to reach a resolution.
- c. The timely nature of electronic communication may cause frustration, especially if it includes extensive processes such as arranging meetings between various role players, e.g. if legal advice has to be sought by PBHS on the matter reported.

2. Expectations of support

- a. The extent of support may be dependent on numerous factors, including:
 - i. The willingness of the reporter to share details pertaining to the incident(s).
 - ii. The willingness of the reporter to connect to the available support structures at PBHS.
 - iii. The willingness of reporters to, on their own accord, make use of external support structures suggested.
 - iv. The willingness of reporters to follow through with the process once initial reporting has been done.

3. Expectations of confidentiality

- a. The identification of third parties named through reporting or sharing evidence does not take into consideration their rights.
- b. Confidentiality can be ensured only as far as technology can support the safety of information using the technological platform, in this case the Google platform.

4. Legal and/or ethical considerations

- a. Legal and ethical regulations apply to health care professionals and educators when certain information and/or situations involving minors come to light, indicating that there are some limits to confidentiality that will be clearly explained to the PBHS pupils in the introduction of the reporting form.

4. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE VARIOUS TYPES OF REPORTS

This section of the policy intends to guide the practical implementation of the confidential reporting form in the PBHS context as it relates to psychological services offered at the school. The psychology department at PBHS will receive all reports using this platform. Falling outside the scope of the psychology department is the reports received that indicate disciplinary or behavioural reports, as well as reports of concerning general behavioural patterns in the school. These reports will be received by the psychology department, but immediately referred on to a senior management staff member for further action. All psychological or emotional concerns will remain in the scope of the psychology department whom will manage these reports. These may include, amongst others, reports about depression, self-harm, suicide, anxiety, self-esteem, trauma, abuse, interpersonal or relational concerns, and environmental challenges.

The profession of psychology is regulated in terms of the *Health Professions Act, 56 of 1974*, the *Children's Act, 38 of 2005* and *Annexure 12 - Rules of Conduct Pertaining Specifically to The Profession of Psychology*. The Health Professional Counsel of South Africa (HPCSA) is the regulating body appointed in terms of the HPA to ensure registered psychologists practice ethically within the South African context. A failure by a registered psychologist to comply with any conduct determined by the *Health Professions Act, 56 of 1974* may result in disciplinary actions against the practitioner.

According to the ethical rules of conduct for practitioners registered under the *Health Professions Act, 56 of 1974*, a registered psychologist shall:

1. Protect a client(s) from harm and act in their best interest at all times.
2. Respect the privacy, choices, and dignity of their client(s).
3. Obtain the written informed consent of the client(s) before rendering psychological services or consultation. In the case of a minor, shall obtain the informed consent of the pupil's legal parent(s) or guardian(s).
4. Safeguard the confidential information obtained in his or her practice and may disclose confidential information to other persons only with the written informed consent of the client concerned/or when a client/someone else is in danger or when ordered to do so by a court of law.
5. When consulting with colleagues, a psychologist shall not disclose information that could reasonably be expected to lead to the identification of a client with whom he/she has a confidential relationship unless it is in the client's best interest or is needed in a school context to establish the necessary identified academic support.

Considering the ethical and legal obligations above, it is important to acknowledge the following considerations when psychologists use the confidential reporting form:

1. The registered psychologists employed by PBHS will act in a facilitating role only while initially engaging a reporter using the confidential reporting form or immediate email communication following the report. All attempts will be made to act according to the regulations of the field of psychology but the relationship will not be regarded as being a psychological or therapeutic one. At this stage of the process the actions of the psychologists will therefore only be to engage with the reporter in an attempt to assist the reporter gain access to the support structure best suited to their situation or report.
2. The relationship will be regarded as a therapeutic relationship once the reporter accepts support with the PBHS psychology department, where actions from the psychologist may include intervention or therapeutic support. This will happen in an in-person relationship and not over electronic communication methods such as email.
3. In cases where suspected harm/abuse/neglect of the reporter or other persons are reported or when a reporter/someone else is in danger, the ultimate goal

would be to protect all the parties involved. The actions of the psychologists will best aim to conform to the relevant legislation and regulations of the field of psychology with the intention to act in the best interest of all pupils in the school.

4. To ensure that pupils of PBHS are informed of the benefits and limitations of this method of reporting, PBHS and the psychology department will periodically promote and inform the confidential reporting form.

5. STRUCTURE OF ROLE PLAYERS INVOLVED IN THE USE OF THE GUARDIAN APPLICATION

Role player	Responsibilities in using the confidential reporting form
Pupil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uses the form report any significant concerns about oneself or others experiencing distress or harm, or to report on concerning behaviour taking place in the school. ● Takes responsibility for not misusing the form to report false information or for malicious intent. ● Uses the form with the purpose of seeking guidance on support structures, to give permission and initiate investigation, or to bring to the school's awareness concerning patterns of behaviour.
Psychology department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acts as the managers of the reporting system/avenue. ● Receives the initial report. ● Refers investigative or awareness reports to senior management staff after gaining permission to do so. ● Initiates support or intervention with the reporter if the report indicated support.
Senior Management Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refers to the Headmaster, Senior Deputy Headmaster and other Deputy Headmasters. ● Receives the referred reports from the psychology department. ● Initiates the first contact with the reporter when the report indicates investigation or awareness.
Anti-Bullying Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To investigate all serious bullying and victimization related reports.

6. REFERENCES:

HPCSA. (2004). Professional Board for Psychology: Rules of Conduct Pertaining Specifically to Psychology. Form 223: Health Professions Council of South Africa.

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