

POLICY REGARDING LEARNER SUPPORT

AIM

We at Blessed Perfect Academy are committed to responses to HIV and AIDS, poverty and abuse that result in:

- **A school environment** that is safe, adequately resourced, and is a multi-purpose centre of care, support, hope, learning and service in the community.
- **Learners** who are given equal access to knowledge and skills, health care, and nutrition that sustain them in mind, body, and spirit; and who are aware of and committed to behaviours that protect them from HIV and AIDS infection.
- **Educators** who are equipped and supported to teach about HIV and AIDS and are role models for responsible behaviour to their learners and communities.
- **Partnerships** with relevant government agencies, non-government and community-based organisations, donors, communities, faith groups, and others that are based on mutual respect and shared commitment to the future of a healthy, caring school where quality education is provided, that is free of discrimination against those living with HIV or AIDS and where the effects of poverty and abuse are diminished.

IDENTIFYING VULNERABLE LEARNERS

- Educators identify these learners by following the patterns in their school performance (e.g. a drop in performance) changes in their behaviour, and through general interaction with learners (taking a personal interest and talking to learners).
- This process of identifying vulnerable learners is something that is a systematised in the school.
- All educators are briefed on the need to be aware of learners exhibiting signs of neglect or difficult behaviours. Identifying vulnerable learners is seen as a role that all educators are required to play.
- Once a learner is identified as being in some way vulnerable or in need of support, they are referred to the coordinator of the School Based Support Team which then interacts with the learner in order to try to establish the nature and source of the problem/s being faced by them.

GUIDELINES RELATING TO THE RIGHTS AND TREATMENT OF LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS WHO ARE HIV POSITIVE

The constitutional rights of all learners and educators must be protected equally.

- There should be no compulsory disclosure of HIV/AIDS status (applicable to learners and educators).
- The testing of learners as a prerequisite for attendance at an institution, or of an educator as a prerequisite of service, is prohibited.
- No HIV+ learner or educator may be discriminated against; they must be treated in a just, humane, and life-affirming way.
- No learner may be denied admission to or continued attendance at an institution because of his or her actual or perceived HIV status.
- No educator may be denied appointment to a post because of his or her actual or perceived HIV status.
- Learners who are HIV+ should lead as full a life as possible and not be denied the opportunity to receive an education to the maximum of their ability. Likewise, HIV+ educators should lead as full a professional life as possible, with the same rights and opportunities as other educators.
- If and when learners with HIV or AIDS become incapacitated through illness, the school should make work available to them for study at home and should support continued learning where possible... or provide older learners with distance education.

SECURITY

Address weak areas at the school such as security. Since this is an issue which the whole school community is likely to feel strongly about, you will most probably find a lot of people who are committed to becoming involved in a project to make the school a safe environment.

PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Psycho-social support has been defined as an ongoing process of meeting emotional, social, mental and spiritual needs, all of which are considered essential elements of meaningful and positive human development. It goes beyond simply meeting children's physical needs. It places great emphasis on children's psychological and emotional needs, and their need for social interaction.

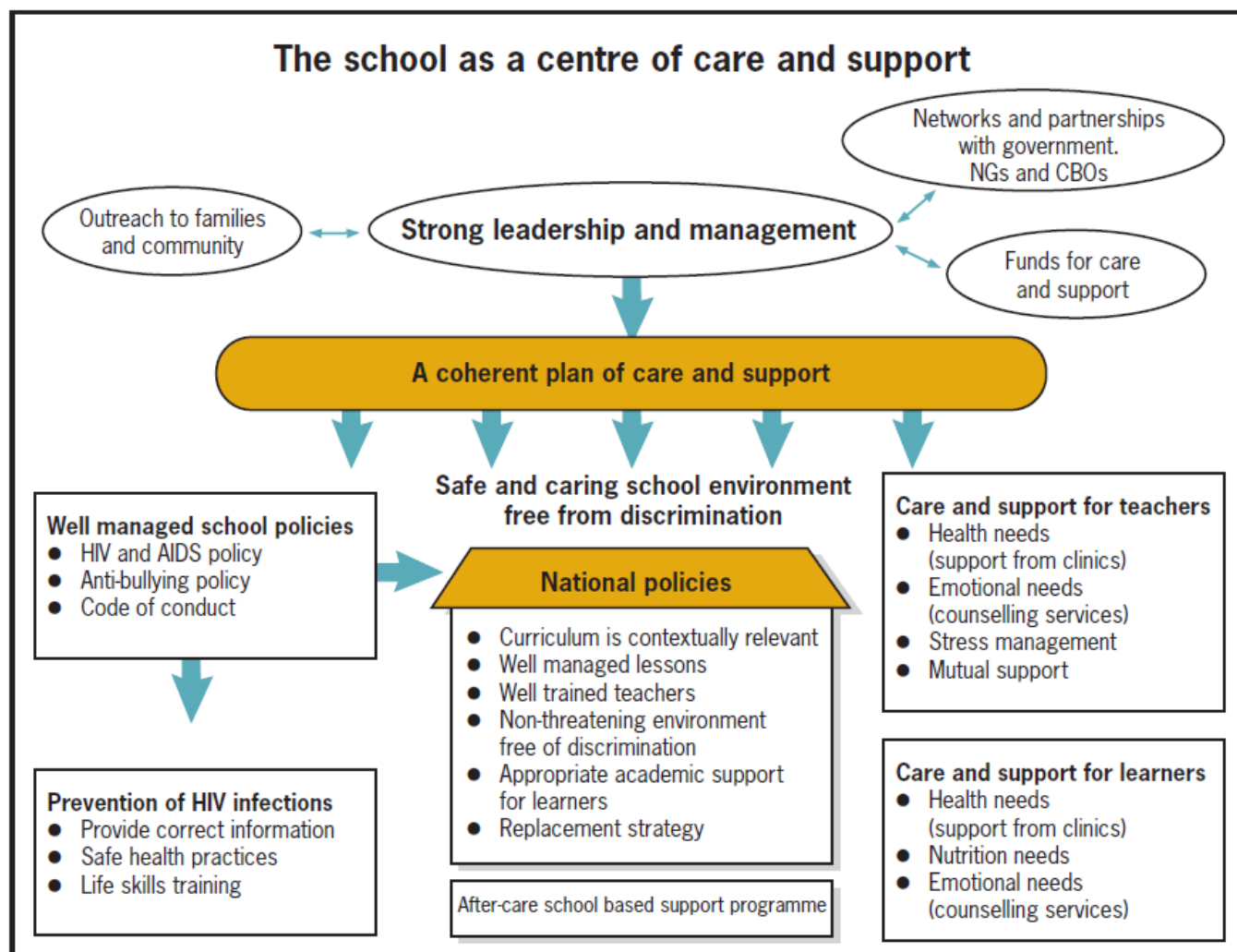


- Orphans and other vulnerable children require psycho-social support because of the trauma and stress they have experienced. Trauma is an emotional shock that produces long-lasting harmful effects on the individual.
- Parental illness and death are causes of emotional trauma for children and young people.
- Stress is an emotional condition experienced or felt when an individual has to cope with unsettling, frustrating or harmful situations. It is a disturbing sense of helplessness, which is uncomfortable and which creates uncertainty and self-doubt. Psycho-social support aims to help children and young people cope with emotional trauma and stress.

SUPPORT SERVICES

- The Department of Health has established centres for voluntary counselling and testing for HIV and AIDS (VCT) and also offers anti-retroviral treatment and therapy. You can get a list of contact details for these centres at the District Office of the Department of Health in your area.
- The Department of Home Affairs regional offices provide the necessary documentation needed to access various child and support grants.
- The Department of Social Development offers support for families and helps them gain childcare, disability and other grants. You can approach the regional offices of SASSA (the South African Social Services Agency) and get information about what support they offer and what the procedures are for obtaining grants.
- The South African Police Service's Child Protection Units (CPUs) can be contacted if you suspect that learners in your school are victims of abuse of any kind. This unit has trained personnel who give advice about what actions to take.





This policy was adopted by the School Management on _____

This policy has been made available to school personnel and is readily accessible to parents and learners on request.

This policy will be reviewed and updated every year.

Signed _____
School Management

Date: _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date: _____

Signed _____
Educator Representative

Date: _____

