

Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other children who watch, and less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up, and it rarely sorts itself out. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating/threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society. No one person or group whether staff or pupil, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at the School.

Why Is An Anti-Bullying Policy Necessary?

The School believes that its pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied.

All institutions, both large and small, contain some number of pupils with the potential for bullying behaviour. If a school is well disciplined and organised, it can minimise the occurrence of bullying. The School also has a clear policy on the promotion of good citizenship, where it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is WRONG and will not be tolerated.

It is important therefore that the School has a clear written policy to promote this belief, where both pupils and parents/guardians are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

What is Bullying?

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. It can be:-

Physical

A child can be physically punched, kicked, hit, spat at, etc.

Verbal

Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/social disability, or personality, etc.

Exclusion

A child can be bullied simply by being excluded from discussions/activities, with those they believe to be their friends.

Damage to Property or Theft

Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen. Physical threats may be used by the bully in order that the pupil hand over property to them.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED?

Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon.

- ◆ Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is WRONG.
- ◆ Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- ◆ Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- ◆ Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- ◆ Be assertive - shout "NO!" Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- ◆ Fighting back may make things worse. If you decide to fight back, talk to a teacher or parent/guardian first.
- ◆ Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.

Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

If you know someone is being bullied-

- TAKE ACTION! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

As a Parent

- Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.
- Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, how lunch time was spent etc.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the School IMMEDIATELY. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse!
- Tell your own son/daughter there is nothing wrong with him or her. It is not his/her fault that they are being bullied.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the School policy concerning bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help.

As a School

- Organise the community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying.
- Use any opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying, and the appropriate way to behave towards each other, e.g. the PSE programme/Circle Time.
- Deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary.
- Review School Policy and its degree of success.
- The School staff will continue to have a firm but fair discipline structure. The rules should be few, simple and easy to understand.

- Not use teaching materials or equipment which give a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, sex, etc.
- Encourage pupils to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes a review of what friendship really is.
- Encourage pupils to treat everyone with respect.
- We will treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from our School.

Action to be taken when Bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected we talk to the suspected victim, the suspected bully and any witnesses. If any degree of bullying is identified, the following action will be taken:-

Help, support and counselling will be given as is appropriate to both the victims and the bullies:

We support the **victims** in the following ways:

- By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their class teacher, or another teacher if they choose.
- Informing the victims' parents/guardians.
- By offering continuing support when they feel they need it.
- By taking one or more of the seven disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying.

We also discipline, yet try to help the bullies in the following ways:

- By talking about what happened, to discover why they became involved.
- Informing the bullies' parents/guardians.
- By continuing to work with the bullies in order to get rid of prejudiced attitudes as far as possible.
- By taking one or more of the eight disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying.

Disciplinary Steps

- 1) The bully will be warned officially to stop offending
- 2) Loss of Golden Time
- 3) Informing the bullies' parents/guardians
- 4) They may be excluded from the School premises at break and/or lunch times
- 5) We may arrange for them to be escorted to and from the School premises
- 6) If they do not stop bullying they will be suspended for a minor fixed period (one or two days).
- 7) If they carry on they will be recommended for suspension for a major fixed period (up to five days) or an indefinite period
- 8) If they will not end such behaviour they will be recommended for permanent exclusion (expulsion).