

Anti Bullying Policy and Procedures

"Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence (physical and mental). They must be kept from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them".

Article 19 U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child 1992

Introduction

We, in Our Lady's and St. Mochua's P.S., have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of pupils in our charge. We will carry out this duty through this Anti Bullying Policy which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential.

A purposeful working environment in school is essential for effective learning and teaching. How pupils behave will be closely linked to our school's ethos and pastoral care arrangements. In order to ensure success in promoting and sustaining good behaviour we will have the following:

- A clear statement on bullying as set out in this policy, indicating how our school will identify and deal promptly and firmly with instances of bullying.
- The promotion of confidence among pupils and parents that their concerns about bullying will be taken seriously through careful investigation and, if substantiated, result in prompt action.
- Instil in the children an understanding that the impact that Bullying can have on others. We do this via PDMU which includes a Personal Safety Programme, Roots of Empathy, Changemaker Programme and Leadership Roles.
- These Programmes will promote pupils' consideration and respect for others, enhances their self respect, confidence and self esteem and, through suitably challenging classroom approaches, provide opportunities for them to develop their assertiveness and self-protection skills.

SCHOOL VISION

'Reaching for the Future... A Voice Today'

Our school vision is a central theme that is reflected throughout everything that makes our school. This includes relationships, curricular, extra curricular, policy and practice. 'Reaching for the Future... A Voice Today...' means exactly that. We have a common goal in that we are preparing the children for the future and they are striving for the future. In addition everyone involved with the school, pupils, teachers, non teaching staff and parents have a voice and everyone will be listened to.

Aims and objectives of our anti-bullying policy

We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in an environment which is free from intimidation and fear.

Accordingly, we will work to create an environment within which positive relationships will be fostered and violent behaviour of any sort will be unacceptable.

Within such an environment, bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.

Should bullying occur, the needs of victims of bullying will be paramount, and the school will take all reasonable measures to ensure that the situation is resolved and will not re occur.

The school will seek to involve and inform parents in all areas of its anti-bullying work.

Links with other school policies

This anti-bullying policy forms part of our school's overall Pastoral Care Policy.

It links with the child protection policy in which the school outlines the steps it will take to protect children from harm and develop their personal safety strategies.

It links with the positive behaviour policy in which the school outlines the types of behaviour which are considered appropriate and inappropriate, together with the sanctions which will be used as part of the disciplinary process.

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening and to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of the victim and bully will be personally contacted when bullying behaviour is identified.

Definition of Bullying

Following consultation with governors, teachers, pupils, parents and ancillary staff, the following definition of bullying behaviour has been agreed:

Bullying can be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself.

It may take various forms, including physical, verbal and emotional.

Examples of bullying behaviour include:

Physical: kicking, nipping, pushing, tripping

Verbal: name-calling, teasing, spreading rumours

Emotional: excluding from play, threatening, pulling faces

If unchecked, bullying can be profoundly damaging to the victim in both the short and longer term, emotionally or physically or both, and can seriously disrupt or impair the capacity to learn and develop.

General Strategies for Promoting and Sustaining Good Behaviour

Our Anti Bullying Policy and Procedures

- a) are based on a whole school approach
- b) are widely disseminated to and readily understood by staff, parents & pupils
- c) have clear, stepped procedures for dealing with breaches of discipline
- d) are fairly and consistently applied

Our system for early identification of pupils presenting behavioural difficulties is based on the effective integration of policy and provision for school discipline, pastoral care & special needs. There is appropriate staff development & effective links with relevant external agencies.

Preventive Steps

All pupils are entitled:

- To be protected from all forms of violence both physical and mental
- To be kept safe from harm
- To be given proper care by those looking after him/her

We, in Our Lady's and St. Mochua's P.S., intend to prevent/ minimise the opportunities for bullying behaviour to occur by use of:

Circle Time, peer assistance, playground management, staff observations and supervisory arrangements.

Teaching and Non Teaching Staff should:

- Be appropriate role models at all times
- Be alert for signs of bullying behaviour
- Be punctual to class & during times of supervision

- Provide active support for victims without placing them at further risk
- Report incidents on keeping with designated procedures

Our school wishes to create a safe and caring environment by establishing an anti bullying ethos. This ethos can contribute effectively to the prevention of bullying occurring. We promote this ethos by having the following:

- Good relationships between teachers and pupils existing in and out of the classroom
- The pupils showing a strong sense of belonging to the school community
- The confidence and self-esteem of the pupils promoted through a range of curricular, extra curricular & other after school activities
- The pupils are encouraged to value one another & to express their views while appreciating the view of others; they respect the property of other people.

Agreed code of conduct for the school community

Pupils:

Pupils have an entitlement to be educated in an environment which is safe, caring and respectful of their individual needs.

Pupils have a responsibility to treat all other pupils, teachers and other staff with respect. They have a responsibility to refrain from engaging in bullying behaviour and to report it if they are aware of it occurring.

Parents:

Parents have an entitlement to expect that their child will be educated in an environment which is safe, caring and respectful of their individual needs.

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their child co-operates with teachers, other staff and other pupils. They have a responsibility to inform the school of any incidents of bullying which they are aware of.

Teachers and other staff:

Teachers and other adults in the school community have an entitlement to work in an environment which is characterised by respect and caring for all.

Teachers and other adults in the school community have a responsibility to contribute to the creation of such an environment and to work for the well being of all pupils.

Procedures For Dealing With Incidents Of Bullying

Guidelines for teachers:

1. Record all incidents.

When a bullying incident is reported, the information will be passed on to the following people:

The teacher of any child involved

The principal

The designated teacher for child protection

2. Investigation of an incident

This will normally be carried out by the principal and /or Odesignated teacher for child protection, in co-operation with any class teachers concerned.

Pupils involved will be interviewed and a record made of their responses using the school's incident report form.

Parents of all pupils involved will be informed of the school's action up to this point and will be kept informed of subsequent action .

3. Meet with parents of both parties.

4. Agreeing a plan for resolution

Working with the pupils concerned, the designated teacher will devise a plan for resolution of the conflict. This plan will include

targets for acceptable behaviour and will set out support measures which will be provided for the pupils concerned.

Any disciplinary action required will use the system of sanctions which is set out in the school's discipline policy.

5. Review situation at a later stage.

The situation will informally monitored on a daily basis and formally reviewed within one month of the initial report. This will be done by the designated teacher, in co-operation with the other teachers, pupils and parents concerned.

6. Involvement of other agencies in provision of support

When necessary, the school will draw on support from a range of outside agencies including Education Welfare Officer, Behaviour Management Team and the Educational Psychology Service. In most instances, the school will seek to deal with the situation from within its own resources. However, if it becomes clear at step 3 or 4 that outside help is needed, the school will not hesitate to avail of it.

Guidelines for Parents:

If you think your child is being bullied:

1. DISCUSS the situation with your child (if they tell you).

Be calm

Show sensitivity

Show concern

If your child is unwilling to tell you (for whatever reason) try to make them understand that the situation will not improve until action is taken/ they tell someone.

2. ALWAYS inform someone at school and/or encourage your child to tell a member of staff. If your child will not give any details to you, please still inform us of your concern.

Every report will be dealt with individually, sensitively and in confidence.

The school will take appropriate action in line with the school policy.

If you wish to discuss any of these matters please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the Principal and the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Mrs Hamilton) and team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the victim during the school day. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the designated teacher outlining the action being taken.

Guidelines for Pupils

- treat all other pupils, teachers and other staff with respect
- refrain from engaging in bullying behaviour
- report bullying behaviour if they are aware of it

Sanctions used to combat bullying behaviour

These are necessary for three main reasons:

- to make the particular child aware of the school/teacher disapproval of unacceptable behaviour
- to protect other children
- to protect the authority of teachers should that be threatened

Sanctions should

- be constructive
- be applied with sensitivity, flexibility and discrimination
- where possible be related to the misdemeanour
- be specific to the culprit and not applied to whole group

In accordance with the school's Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy sanctions will be applied on a 'staged basis'. However, in some instances, pending the nature of the unacceptable behaviour it may be necessary to move to a more advanced stage. This will be determined by Mr Farrell in conjunction with the class teacher. Children in KS2 will be made aware of each stage.

Stage 1: Unacceptable Behaviour – Not following school rules

At stage one the teacher will have responsibility for applying sanctions as and when required. These may include

- immediate verbal checking of misbehaviour
- a minor penalty relevant to the offence, e.g. an apology and/or temporary loss of merit marks or temporary loss of smiley face or loss of break or removal to another class for short period
- If continuous misbehaviours persist the teacher will refer the pupil to Mr Farrell who will place the child on to stage 2 of the behavioural stage

Stage 2: Repeated or Unacceptable Behaviour – referral to Mr Farrell

Stage 2 referral will be for repeated misbehaviour as in stage 1 and/or use of physical force, disrespect shown to staff members/property or other more serious misbehaviours

- loss of a break/play park/golden time
- temporary removal of a pupil from his/her peers into another class/quiet room
- temporary or permanent loss of privileges - Captaincy, Committee Members, Golden Time etc
- removal from a class outing/sports events etc
- informal parent consultation (may include phone call/meeting with class teacher/principal)
- Short term placement on an Individual Positive Behaviour Plan

Stage 3: Repetition of behaviours as at stage 2

- Formal consultation to include child, parent and staff
- Long term placement on an Individual Positive Behaviour Plan
- Permanent loss of privileges including captaincy, committee membership, participation at school events/activities and/or attendance at school trips etc

Stage 4: After Formal Consultation consideration will be given to

- Referral to SELB Behaviour Support Team for advice/guidance
- Suspension/Expulsion. Advice will be sought from appropriate CCMS/DENI

Please note that at any of the stages as above a Risk Assessment may be carried out in relation to an individual pupil's participation in any school activity/event/outing.

Teachers and other relevant school staff should consider themselves responsible at all times for the behaviour of all pupils. Responsibility for the behaviour of all pupils in the school is one which all teachers share.

In all matters relating to the maintenance of discipline and the applications of sanctions it must be remembered that our aim is to develop self discipline in our pupils and build and maintain their self-esteem.

Acceptance of admission to the school implies the parent's acceptance of the School's Positive Behaviour Policy.

Monitoring and Evaluating

This policy is continually monitored by the school principal. This policy will be reviewed every three years and/or up dated when advice is given by DENI. All stake holders will be involved in the review through a consultation process.

Consultation with all stakeholders took place throughout the 2017 - 18 school year.

Signed:

Chairman of the Board of Governors:

Date: