

Anti Bullying Policy

Our school has decided to have a written anti-bullying policy to show to all children, parent(s)/guardian(s) and staff that bullying, verbal, psychological or physical is not tolerated in this school. Moreover, everyone will be expected to ensure that bullying does not happen and will have a responsibility to tell - emphasizing that this is not "telling tales".

What is bullying?

Bullying is repeated aggression - verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by a group or an individual against others.

N.B. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which cannot be condoned, cannot strictly be described as bullying, but will be dealt with under normal code of discipline. Only when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing can it be termed bullying.

Types of Bullying

- Physical** Repeated hitting, jostling, pushing around, punching etc.
May also be severe physical assaults.
- Verbal** Name-calling, hurtful remarks,
(comments about physical appearance, family etc.)
- Emotional** Deliberate exclusion, passing notes, "whispering", insults etc.

All types are damaging, but verbal and emotional bullying are more difficult to detect and prove.

Signs and symptoms

- a. Be frightened of walking to or from school
- b. Be unwilling to go to school
- c. Beg a parent to drive them to school
- d. Begin doing poorly in their school work
- e. Come home regularly with books or clothes destroyed or torn sacks
- f. Become withdrawn, start stammering
- g. Become distressed, stop eating, crying bed wetting
- h. Pattern of physical illness - headaches, stomach pains
- i. Out of character comments about other children
- j. Have their possessions "go missing"
- k. Increased requests for money - stealing
- l. Reluctant to say what is wrong
- m. Begins to bully other children
- n. Continuously making excuses to explain away any of the above

These signs do not necessarily mean that bullying is taking place, but when repeated or recurring in combination they should always be investigated.

Strategies to prevent bullying:

Teachers will listen sympathetically to children and take complaints further on their behalf while endeavouring to make it safe to tell.

During the school year each teacher will make pupils:

- aware what bullying is and
- the consequences of same and
- emphasise that they have a right to tell even if they are not personally involved.

Separate strategies were suggested to deal with bullying:

- a. For situations which can be dealt with by the teacher in the classroom or on yard duty.
- b. For situations which need further action

What to do

- a. Ask them what is wrong (perhaps avoid the word Bullying)
- b. Always let them know they can tell you anything they wish
- c. Don't fob them off with sticks and stones
- d. Never laugh at them
- e. Telling them to hit back only makes matters worse

What we do

- a. All allegations of Bullying are treated seriously no matter how trivial. We try to make telling worthwhile.
- b. All incidents are referred to Principal, Deputy Principal, Class Teacher.
- c. Parent(s)/guardian(s) of both bullying child and victim will be notified.
- d. We encourage children to tell if they are being bullied. It is our view that there are never innocent bystanders in bullying.
- e. If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in incidents of bullying behaviour, they and their parent(s)/guardian(s) are told formally that they are in breach of the schools Code of Discipline and Conduct and this is recorded in the schools records and a feedback is given to the parents of the victim. A system of recording is in place which quickly identifies a child who is repeatedly harassing others in the school yard at play time.
- f. Sanctions, where deemed necessary are applied as per Code of Discipline.
- g. We believe that both the bullying child and the victim are in need of help.

Remember

- a. Bullying is learned behaviour, therefore it can be unlearned.
- b. Most children, with help and support can overcome this problem.