

ST. PATRICK'S GIRLS' NATIONAL SCHOOL HOLLYPARK

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

This review, ratified by the Board of Management, has been drafted, following consultation with the Principal, representatives of the staff and parents.

The Board of Management is the authority responsible for ensuring that a fair and efficient Bullying Prevention Policy has been drawn up in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The Principal is responsible to the Board for the implementation of the policy.

Adult Bullying Prevention: See separate policy.

Bullying – A Definition

1. Bullying is defined (Education Welfare Act 2000) as behaviour that is serious, distressing to the victim/s and repeated over a long period.

This includes: persistent instances of:

- (i) Physical bullying: constant hitting, shoving, pushing around etc.
 - (ii) Verbal bullying: derogatory remarks about a child's appearance, clothing school work, family, family circumstances, ability at sport, art etc.
 - (iii) Interference with another child's possessions, books, lunch, money, clothes etc.
 - (iv) Deliberate exclusion of one child by a group, while at the same time letting the child know she is the topic of conversation..
2. We try to discourage the use of the term 'bullying' unless justified :
 - It 'criminalises' the perpetrator without a fair investigation
 - It covers too broad a range of behaviour from e.g. breaking pencils to beating up badly
 - The behaviour should be named e.g. calling names, punching, kicking etc.until/unless bullying is in question.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Bullying clearly runs counter to the School Philosophy of promoting care and respect. It is instilled in our pupils that nobody has the right to make another feel uncomfortable by any action or by any use of language. The Stay Safe, S.P.H.E and the Religious Education programmes are among the curricular areas where the school encourages good relationships and respect and sets out to counteract bullying behaviour. As a matter of policy, we encourage disclosure of information where instances of alleged bullying occur or are suspected. Pupils are made aware that since bullying is an affront to human dignity and a violation of personal freedom, disclosure is proper and necessary.

POLICY AIMS:

1. To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
2. To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, pupils and parents, teaching and non teaching staff.
3. To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
4. To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour. (Kept in Principal's office.)
5. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
6. To evaluate the effectiveness of school policy on anti-bullying behaviour.

BULLYING PREVENTION CODE

1. Bullying prevention ethos in our school is approved by Board of Management .
2. Children are to be alerted to types of bullying behaviour
3. Children are encouraged to be open with teachers .
4. Use of drama, role play, and work shops are used to help children cope with all aspects of bullying.
5. Children learn that bullying is not appropriate behaviour.

Code of Respect: Children should learn:

1. To recognize their own needs but also the need for self control.
2. To accept other children's opinions.
3. To express feelings, emotions and experiences.
4. To lend things to others, to respect school materials.
5. To listen to others and take turns to speak.
6. To accept opinions that are different from theirs.
7. To learn to accept help from others when necessary.
8. To play with other children
9. To invite girls who are excluded.
10. To specify the reason for behaviour.

STRATEGIES TO CULTIVATE A CLIMATE OF ACCEPTANCE AND RESPECT FOR OTHERS INCLUDE;

As outlined in the body of this Policy.

- Use of posters, leaflets, role-play, Circle Time, discussion from time to time.
- Self Esteem enhancement
- *Guidelines for Pupils - Attached - Appendix 1.*
- *Guidelines for Teachers – below + Appendix 3*
- *Guidelines for Parents – Attached – Appendix2.*

Bullying Prevention – Self Esteem

As self esteem is a most influential factor in determining behaviour, teachers should provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of worth. Bullying is closely connected with low levels of self esteem both in the bully and the victim. Low levels of self esteem in the bully are often present resulting in bullies needing to find someone to victimize. A high level of self esteem is an essential ingredient for successful living. High self esteem enables individuals to cope with mistakes, failures, disappointment and success.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

*Attached: Guidelines for pupils (to be displayed in every classroom)
Guidelines for Parents*

Appendix 2

- Reports of bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial, should be recorded by the teacher and then (along with outcomes) should be kept in the Principal's office.
- The matter is to be investigated and dealt with, in the first place, by teachers
- Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils should be referred immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- All staff members, including, teachers, SNAs, secretary, and caretaker and others (e.g. cleaners) should be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the appropriate teaching member of staff.

Bullying Prevention Procedures: The Class Teacher:

1. Fosters kind, fair, friendly, and co-operative atmosphere in the group through e.g. class discussions, role play and investigation of suitable themes in areas such as Religion, SPHE, Stay Safe, Circle Time, Drama, Team Games etc.
2. Raises awareness of the school policy on bullying. Has 'Guidelines for Pupils' (Appendix 1)posted in a prominent place in the classroom and the children's attention is to be drawn to it on a regular basis.
3. Children to be given simple strategies to cope with minor conflicts or disagreements.
4. Advises children that a joke is no longer a joke when the other person feels upset by it.
5. If the incidents are not too serious, the situation could be monitored for a while – following a chat with both parties. Parents may be enlisted to help.
6. Seizes opportunities for self esteem building
7. Monitors new or vulnerable pupils and watches out for signs that may point to a child being bullied.
8. Parents or guardians who know of bullying incidents in the school should inform the class teacher.
9. Encourages the 'victim' and/or other pupils to 'tell' in confidence as early as possible and all serious allegations are recorded. Use the label of the behaviour (pinching, pushing etc.) rather than 'bullying' until/unless bullying is established.
10. The class is to be given a general talk and teachers on yard duty may need to be alerted.
11. Talks to the individual child who is allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour, giving advice /guidance - (talk given privately). Victim and perpetrator are to be treated seriously and with fairness, listening to all sides. Parents to be informed and their support enlisted.

Further Guidelines for assisting the teacher to investigate and deal with bullying - Appendix 3

SANCTIONS FOR SERIOUS MISBEHAVIOUR

1. The child is informed that a record is kept of her behaviour.
2. Her parents are informed for repeated or serious offences.
3. A letter of apology is to be written by pupil and signed by Parent/guardian.

Bullying Prevention Procedures: The Principal

1. Where incidents persist or in the case of a more serious aggression, parents or guardians of victims and bullies should be informed by the Principal or Deputy Principal earlier rather than later so that they are given the opportunity of discussing the matter. They are then in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs.
2. Where parents suspect that their child is being bullied, they are advised to keep a record of the incidents (recording, date and details) over a period or they may wish to get a copy of the 'Record of Misbehaviour' form from the Principal (Appendix 4) on which to record incidents over a three-week period.
3. As an accusation of bullying made by a parent is serious, the Principal would require a signed note. The Principal will advise that the alleged perpetrator's parents need to be told and may be given a copy of the note.
4. If the situation is serious and is continued for a time, direct contact between parents will be encouraged.
5. The situation will be monitored. The victim and perpetrator/s will be talked to periodically and the parents kept informed.
5. If the situation is not resolved current guidelines from the Department of Education will be followed.
17. In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally in the first instance be raised with the staff member in question and if necessary, with the Principal.

Bullying incidents outside of the School

(Observed by a staff member)

1. If an incident outside of school is observed by a teacher, it should be investigated and details noted and recorded.
2. Parents to be notified and the incident to be dealt with as they see fit.
3. No sanctions imposed by the school.

(Observed by other)

1. If the incident outside of school is reported to a teacher, it should be investigated and details noted and recorded.
2. Parents notified and the incident to be dealt with as they see fit.
3. No sanctions imposed.
4. Should further instances occur and parents have difficulty resolving the situation satisfactorily – parents are to be advised to contact the local Junior Liaison Officer.

Implementation OF POLICY

Teachers' attention (especially that of new teachers and substitutes) is drawn to the policy at the beginning of every school year and as necessary.

Parents are also advised of the availability of the policy – which can be viewed on the school website.

The booklet for new parents will include information on the policy with guidelines for parents. Children's attention will be drawn from time to time and as part of their SPHE programme. It is planned that the Guidelines for Pupils be posted in every classroom.

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL POLICY ON BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

1. Through staff discussion.
2. Through feedback from children and parents
3. By monitoring the frequency of reports of 'bullying'

Policy reviewed: April 2011
By: Susan Murphy (Deputy Principal)
Review due: April 2013

This policy will be subject to review by the Board of Management in 2013 or as adjustments are considered necessary.

Policy ratified by the Board of Management. Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Chairman)

Guidelines for Pupils

Remember to follow the School Guidelines including:

- Keep unhelpful hands, feet, objects and comments to yourself.
- Be in the right place at the right time.
- Say **NO** to bullies.
- Know the difference between telling about and telling on.

Your teacher will explain to you what bullying is. Here are some examples:

- Name calling, hurtful remarks, not talking to someone.
- Leaving someone out, hitting, kicking, pushing, taking or damaging other people's things.
- Regularly making another person feel uncomfortable.

<p>When you are being bullied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell yourself that bullying is wrong. You do not deserve to be bullied. • Say NO to bullies. Tell them to stop. • Get away from the situation and tell an adult as quickly as possible. • Try not to fight back. • If possible avoid being alone in places where bullying happens. 	<p>After you have been bullied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell a teacher, another adult in your school, your family. • If you are scared to tell on your own, ask a friend to go with you. • Keep on speaking until someone listens. • Don't blame yourself for what has happened.
<p>When you are telling an adult about being bullied be clear about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has happened to you. • How often it has happened. • Who was involved. • Who saw what was happening. • Where it happened. • What you have done about it already. • How it started in the first place. 	<p>What pupils who witness bullying can do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not allow someone to be deliberately left out of a group. • Do not smile or laugh when someone is being bullied. • Tell a teacher or staff member what is happening. • Encourage people who are bullied to join in with group games etc. • Tell the bully to stop what they are doing.

Guidelines for Parents

General things to remember

- Be aware of the school's policy on bullying. Remember we are a telling school.
- The staff are always willing to speak with parents but remember to organize a good time to talk.
- Get more information on bullying and be comfortable with your understanding of it.
- Maintain good communication with your child, provide opportunities for one-to-one chats.
- Support any bullying awareness campaigns in the school and wider community.
- NB: There will always be conflicts between children. However bullying is different to the normal conflicts that children have. Remember bullying is defined as the persistent deliberate causing of physical pain or emotional distress.
- Respect your child and teach them to respect others.
- Don't let your children come to school too early or hang around after school – there is only supervision during school hours.
- If you witness what appears to be a bullying incident in the school, make your concerns known to a member of staff.

What if your child is involved in bullying?

- If your child tells you they have witnessed a bullying incident, find out what happened and let the school know.
- If your child is upset over something that happened to them, try to determine whether there was genuine bullying involved. Again you can approach the teacher and get their perspective.
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying and watch for the signs that your child may be bullied.
- If you are worried that your child is being bullied, ask her directly. Give your child a chance to vent her feelings about being bullied. **But remember to stay calm and listen to your child.**
- Take bullying seriously and find out the facts when told about an incident of bullying. Keep a written diary of all incidents. Don't agree to keep the bullying a secret.
- Empower your child with the skills to deal with bullies. Help children practice strategies such as shouting no, walking with confidence and keeping away from bullies.
- If the bullying is happening on the way to or from school arrange to meet your child and walk with them.
- If your child has been identified as displaying bullying behaviour, stay calm and don't panic. Try to find out the reasons why. Communication channels between home and school are open to you. The school will carefully and sensitively investigate all allegations of bullying and listen to all viewpoints, bearing in mind that bullying hurts all involved. Our goal is to understand the needs of all the children involved with the aim of re-establishing good relations and harmony within the group.

Further Guidelines for investigating and Dealing with Bullying

Teachers are best advised to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by either pupils, staff or parents/guardians. Such incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour. In any incident of bullying, the teacher should speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

1. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
2. If a group/gang is involved, each member should be interviewed individually and then the gang should be met as a group. Each member should be asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.
3. If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her how she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and try to get her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
4. Each member of the gang should be helped to handle the possible pressures that often face them from the other members after interview by the teacher.
5. Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour should keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
6. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred; meet with the parents or guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate. Explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy. Discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school.
7. Arrange follow-up meetings with the two parties involved separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

