

Scoil Freastogail Muire

Anti-Bullying Policy - Good Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other children who watch, and a group pressure can draw in less aggressive pupils. Bullying can be problematic for a school – teachers may not know it is going on – pupils may fear that they will become greater victims if they tell on the bully/ies. 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. One of the aims of the School's Code of Behaviour is to minimise the occurrence of bullying through the promotion of good behaviour. The school will also try to distinguish between individual/infrequent acts, which may cause a pupil some discomfort e.g. pupil disagreement, and those unfavourable and sometimes repeated acts, which the school will not tolerate. Though these individual/infrequent interactions and acts are not desired, the teachers cannot always anticipate and intervene in the many interactions and disagreements that can occur among the pupils during the school day. Neither can the school solve incidents that relate to 'Out of School' issues but the school will be mindful that such 'Out of School' issues can have an impact during the school day.

WHY IS AN ANTI-BULLYING POLICY NECESSARY?

*All the pupils have the right of safe passage to the School and home again without the fear of being bullied. 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 numbers of pupils with the potential for bullying behaviour. One of the aims of the School Code of Behaviour Policy is to 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 which is **WRONG** and will not be tolerated.*

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.

The teachers and other staff members have the right to work in an environment free from intimidation from any adult of the school or general community.

The following are the aims of our anti-bullying policy:

- *Create a positive anti-bullying ethos;*
- *Create a positive school climate that focuses on/fosters self-respect, self-discipline and mutual respect and consideration for all members of the school community.*
- *Create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. (This may require a change in attitudes so that pupils realise they are not 'ratting' or 'telling tales' but looking out for the welfare and safety of fellow pupils).*
- *To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians.*
- *To develop procedures for investigating, reporting and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.*
- *Parent education – awareness of definition of bullying, forms of bullying, signs to look out for if suspicious that child is being bullied and suggestions re what both the victim of bullying and the bully can do.*

WHAT IS BULLYING?

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

Bullying are acts of repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical in nature conducted by an individual or group against another individual or group.

a). Physical Bullying.

A child can be physically punched, kicked, hit, spat at, poked, shoved etc. including aggressive body language, facial expressions, eye contact/staring, an intimidating tone of voice and so forth.

b). Verbal Bullying.

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

c). **Emotional/Psychological Bullying:** such as spreading rumours, making fun of, using threatening looks or gestures, excluding or threatening to exclude from groups and from games, ignoring, ostracising or alienating.

d). **Damage to Property or Theft.**

Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen. The bully may use physical threats in order that the pupil hands over property to them. (Extortion).

e). **Cyber Bullying** : using technological items e.g. mobile phones, internet etc. to spread rumours, make fun of, threaten and so forth.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED?

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

a). *Be assertive – Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is WRONG!*

b). *Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.*

c). *Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.*

d). *Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.*

e). *Be assertive – shout "No!" Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.*

f). *Fighting back may make things worse. If you decide to fight back, talk to a teacher or parent/guardian first.*

g). *Have all your possessions marked with your name in both an obvious and hidden place.*

h). *Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.*

i). *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.*

Indications of Bullying/Behaviour:

The following may be signs that a pupil is experiencing some distress.

Anxiety about travelling to/from school

Unwillingness to go to school

Deterioration in educational performance

Pattern of physical illnesses

Unexplained changes in either mood/behaviour

Visible signs of anxiety/distress

Possessions missing

Increased requests for money

Unexplained bruising

Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED:-

a). *Do you ignore the bullying others – TAKE ACTION! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feels unhappy and on there own.*

b). *If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY.*

Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you 'into trouble'.

c). *Do not be, or pretend to be, through fear, friends with a bully.*

As a Parent:-

a). *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 a normal standard.*

b). *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.*

c). *If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the School immediately. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate investigation and action will follow.*

d). *It is important that you advise your child not to fight back in most cases. More often it can make matters worse!*

e). *Tell your own son or daughter there is nothing wrong with him or her. It is not his or her fault that they are being bullied.*

f). *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:-

All parents and guardians of Scoil Freastogail Muire should be familiar with and support the implementation of the agreed Code of Behaviour. This involves co-operating with teachers in instances where their child is causing difficulties either for himself/herself or for others. Parents/guardians must also disclose to the school when they have concerns about any instances of misbehaviour or bullying in relation to a school pupil. Discretion will always be used in such matters. However, parents/guardians must understand that though the school may not reveal its source of information, the school must investigate disclosures in a manner as deemed necessary. Parents/Guardians who may feel that their child/ren is/are being bullied may not question etc. any pupil directly (while that pupil is under school supervision) regarding what they perceive to be undesirable behaviour to their child/ren. Parent(s) should not make a report to the school regarding bullying of their child that they know are not genuine or when they know that it is their own child/ren that is the perpetrator. Parents/Guardians of the child/ren deemed to be causing the offence will be notified on a need to know basis.

- a). *The school tries to minimise opportunities for bullying, e.g. provide increased supervision at problem times, though the use of a teacher supervision rota including using the classroom assistants/Special Needs Assistants - by not allowing 'gang' formations to exist, providing footballs/ basketballs for the pupils at break times etc.*
- b). *Teachers use opportunities to discuss aspects of bullying, and the appropriate way to behave towards each other, e.g. aspects of the religion programme. Aspects of the 'Stay Safe Programme' are taught annually with particular emphases in each First and Fourth class.*
- c). *The school deals quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary.*
- d). *The School will review this School Policy from time to time to ascertain its degree of success/shortcomings adopting any legislation/circulars changes.*
- e). *The School Staff will continue to have a firm but fair discipline structure. Our School rules are few, simple and easy to understand.*
- f). *Teachers will avoid using teaching materials or equipment, which give a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, gender and so forth,*
- g). *We 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.*
- h). *We encourage pupils to make good and correct choices.*
- i). *We encourage pupils to treat everyone with respect.*
- j). *We will treat bullying as serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from our School.*
- k). *The School has in the past organised a Drama Group/Work shop (Sticks and Stones Theatre Group) to visit the school. A dramatisation of some of the ills relating to bullying while also emphasising those aspects found in a non-bullying environment.*
- l). *We appreciate outside agencies, e.g., bus drivers, post person etc. informing us of ether observed or of other known incidents of bullying involving the school pupils. We reserve the right to keep the name of the person who has been informed us confidential.*

How can we promote Friendship and Anti-bullying?

- *Our school Code of Behaviour – awareness of bullying as unacceptable behaviour, emphasis on mutual respect and co-operation.*
- *Friendship code displayed in corridors and classrooms*
- *While everyone can't be 'best friends' stress the importance of being friendly and showing respect to all;*
- *Friendship week. Activities could include artwork, posters, team activities, drama, co-operative games, buddying, shared reading, senior pupils writing a book for junior pupils on the theme of friendship.*
- *Awareness day/week for pupils and parents/guardians*
- *Experiencing Theatre productions that promote friendship, conflict resolution and anger management.*
- *Comprehensive supervision and monitoring of all school related activities.*
- *All members of the school community should have a clear understanding of the policy aims, content, preventative strategies and procedures for investigating and resolving bullying problems.*

- *Building self-esteem – circle time; pupils rewarded for effort and improvement; positive expectations of pupil behaviour and performance;*
- *Teachers model tolerance and understanding and embrace habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in group and community*
- *Positive behaviour will be acknowledged and rewarded:*
 - *Children will be encouraged and praised verbally.*
 - *Extra visits to another class to ‘show and tell’ their presentation or project.*
 - *Children will be awarded some special responsibility or privilege;*
 - *Merit stickers/stamps/homework pass*
 - *A positive comment in a pupil’s homework journal for parents.*
 - *Golden time – class awarded a special privilege for good behaviour (e.g. extra PE/Video);*
 - *Achievement chart/booklet for each child. Homework passes and ‘lucky dip’ will be awarded to children on completion of the chart.*
- *Aspects of the curriculum will be used to positively influence pupil attitudes and values: English literature could stimulate discussion. Co-operation and group enterprise can be fostered through team sports and group work; SPHE Plan; Co-operative games; Walk Tall Programme; Stay Safe, Health Promotion.*

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 (if available), 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, principal or another teacher if they choose.*
- *informing the victims’ parents/guardians.*
- *by offering continuing support when they feel they need it.*
- *arrange for them to be escorted to and from the School premises by an agreed adult if parents are not available to come to the school.*
- *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 seven disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying.*

Procedures for Noting and Reporting Incidents:

- (a) *All reports of bullying should be noted, investigated and dealt with by the class teacher so those pupils will gain confidence in telling. A Report Form will be kept in the office to document instances of bullying.*
- (b) *Serious cases should be referred immediately to the Deputy Principal and the Principal*
- (c) *In serious cases, parents should be informed by the Deputy Principal / Principal.*
- (d) *Parents must be informed of the appropriate person to whom they can make their enquiries regarding bullying*
- (e) *Pupils must understand that reporting is not ‘telling tales’.*
- (f) *Individual teachers should record and take appropriate measures in accordance with policy.*
- (g) *Non-teaching staff should be encouraged to report incidents. Discretion is important.*

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying:

- (i) Calm, unemotional problem-solving approach;*
- (ii) Incidents best investigated outside the classroom situation;*
- (iii) Teacher should speak separately to the pupils involved;*
- (iv) Answers should be sought to questions of What, Where, When, Who and Why;*
- (v) Members of a 'gang' should be met individually and as a group;*
- (vi) Meet parents separately of parties involved;*
- (vii) Meet collectively (if deemed appropriate) the parents and pupils of parties involved.*

The School may not always be in a position to make a judgement regarding who was 'right or wrong' regarding a reported incident of bullying. The school's role is predominantly to give guidance and to promote correct and accepted models of behaviour aspiring to the prevention and to decreasing the incidents of bullying behaviour. The School will

Disciplinary Steps:

- 1. The pupil(s) will be warned officially to stop offending.*
- 2. The pupil(s) may be:
 kept in detention at all/some breaks for a period until the school feels that the bullying behaviour has ceased or will not reoccur. Temporary separation from peers/class may also be implemented.*
- 3. The School will inform the bullies' parents/guardians.*
- 4. We may arrange for the bullies to be escorted to and from the School premises.*
- 5. If they do not stop bullying the BOM will consider (a) suspended for a minor fixed period (one or two days) b). excluded from the School premises at break and/or lunch times for a period as stipulated by the Board of Management (B.O.M.).*
- 6. If they then carry on they will be recommended for suspension to the B.O.M. for a major fixed period (up to five days) or an indefinite period.*
- 7. If they will not end such behaviour, they will be recommended for permanent exclusion (expulsion). See Code of Behaviour re Suspensions and Expulsions.*

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OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

- Using of Questionnaire to survey: (a). Pupils. (b). Parents.*
- a). to ascertain the degree of hidden bullying that may exist, e.g. at school – coming/going home from school – pupil's general environment.*
 - b). to monitor the efficiency of the programme with the view of Policy review.*
 - c). Use of a Reporting Form*

STRATEGIES:

- a). Emphasise rewarding good and acceptable behaviours.*
- b). Compile a pupil profile of the bully/ies.*
- c). Compile a pupil profile of victims.*
- d). Journal of student responses.*
- e). Keeping a class record of identified bullying incidents.*

GENERAL:

- 1. Senior pupils are escorted to their class to classroom in the morning and at all other breaks.*
- 2. Escorting pupils from classroom at P.E. times, lunchtime.*
- 3. Escorting pupils from school classroom/building at end of school day.*
- 4. Have a 'Promoting Accepting Difference' / 'Anti bullying' week – 'Friendship Week' - Classroom/corridors Display of Anti Bullying Theme/Promoting Accepting Difference and Friendship.*

*Slogans – Invite Parents Representatives/B.O.M., PC. to participate.
Representatives/Paper/Photograph.*

Create an 'Anti bullying school slogan'.

- 5. Invite a speaker to address the educational partners on the means and methods that might assist in reducing the likely occurrence of bullying.*

*Distinguishing the difference between a 'Disagreement' and 'Bullying Behaviour'.
Over use of 'bullying' as a term by some parents.*

Parent Reporting

Requesting action but curtailing investigation procedures.

Report Form - School Record

Parent who denies/ defends their child from an allegation of bullying

Requesting to have file/ record deleted.

How confidential is a record Report.

Problems coming from outside the school brought to school - Perception of taking sides

How to ascertain who (at times) is telling the correct/truthful version

Parent - Pupil

Parents may not use the school as a means to chastise other Parents.

When to delete Record of reported bullying

Re examined 19/12/2011