

POLICY ON BULLYING

Introduction

Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education and imposes psychological damage. As such, it is an issue, which must be positively and firmly addressed through a range of school-based measures and strategies through which all members of the school community are enabled to act effectively in dealing with this behaviour. Bullying behaviour affects not only those immediately involved; it affects everyone in the classroom. Bullying behaviour thrives in an atmosphere of uncertainty and secrecy in which the victims often feel a sense of hopelessness and futility against the power being exercised by the bully; a high degree of collective vigilance is needed throughout the local community, the school, and other agencies and by parents if bullying behaviour is to be identified and dealt with in a fair and equitable manner.

POLICY TO PREVENT BULLYING

The school will try to prevent bullying by the following measures:

1. Principal and teachers to raise awareness of the type of behaviour which we consider bullying and the effects of that behaviour through talks to the children whenever the opportunity arises. In these talks we will stress to children that telling about being bullied is not "telling tales" and assure them that they will be listened to and that their information or story will be investigated and acted upon.
2. We will reinforce through example and talks that all children should be treated with respect and equality at all times in order to build self-esteem as this has been shown by research to be the most influential factor in determining behaviour.
3. We will try to be aware of pupils likely to be bullied e.g. pupils with physical or mental differences which would make them stand out. In class we will stop any slagging or comments made about these or other pupils. Also, in class we will ban any use of nick-names of any kind even when the pupil says he/she doesn't mind.
4. We will make sure that pupils are supervised and monitored as well as possible at all times.

5. We will enlist the support of parents of the children in the prevention of bullying by asking them to report any incidents they see, either in school or on the way to and from school, so that these may be investigated.

6. The topic of “Bullying” will be covered in each class as part of our S.P.H.E. programme.

PROCEDURES FOR NOTING AND REPORTING OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR.

1. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way pupils will gain confidence in "telling". This confidence factor is of vital importance.

2. Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils will be referred immediately to the Principal or Vice-Principal.

3. Parents / guardians will be encouraged to report incidents of bullying behaviour which might come to their attention through their children or other parents/guardians.

4. Parents or guardians of victims and bullies will be informed by the Principal or Vice-Principal earlier rather than later of incidents so that they are given the opportunity of discussing the matter. They will then be in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs.

5. Individual teachers will record and take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's policy and Code of Behaviour and Discipline.

6. Non-teaching staff such as the secretary, caretaker, cleaners, will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to an appropriate teaching member of staff.

