

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Introductory Statement: -

This policy was reviewed on October 2021, by school staff, children, Board of Management and ancillary staff were involved in its review.

Rationale: -

Bullying behavior, by it's very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education and imposes psychological damage. As such it is an issue that 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 behavior. (Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, DES, 1993)

The school wishes to nurture each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment. Bullying behavior is contrary to this ethos as it undermines and dilutes the quality of education and has an adverse affect on victims.

At the centre of a whole school response to bullying is the creation of a positive school climate which focuses on the individual . . . (Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, DES 1993)

Aims: -

- This policy is based on the DES guidelines "Countering Bullying Behaviour". It aims to produce a safe and caring environment in which all children can develop to their full potential.
- The school does not tolerate or condone bullying of any form or at any level of the school community. The Board of Management is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community - pupils, staff, and parents are enabled to act effectively to deal with bullying. This policy guides action and organisation within the school for preventing and responding to bullying.
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils and parents.
- To create a school ethos which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.

- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures are in place.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To provide support for those affected by bullying behaviour and those involved in bullying behaviour.

Definition of Bullying: -

Bullying is a word that's wrapped in emotion, but, an act is only considered to be bullying when it is:

- Hurtful
- Repeated
- Deliberate

Bullying may be defined as repeated acts of aggression; which may be verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

Bullying may take many different forms such as physical aggression, damage to property, theft of property, extortion, intimidation, abusive telephone calls, isolation, name calling, writing notes, emailing or texting, abuse of social media websites. As a form of aggressive behaviour it is hurtful and deliberate. It is persistent over time and makes it difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

What bullying isn't.

Bullying should not be confused with teasing, rejection, random acts of violence or physicality and conflict. While children will often tease or fight, this bickering should not be confused with bullying.

All members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying.

Below are some indicators of bullying but may be indicative of other problems: -

- Anxiety about attending school
- Deterioration in educational performance
- Pattern of physical illness
- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress
- Possessions missing

- Increased requests for money
- Unexplained bruising
- Reluctance to say what is troubling him/her

Strategies for Prevention of Bullying: -

1. Fostering a Positive School Ethos: -

- **Board of Management: -**

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board is committed to providing time and resources for the implementation of the policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

- **School Staff : -**

The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance. Children's self-esteem will be developed through celebrating individual differences, achievements, acknowledging good behaviour and manners and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school. Teachers will help pupils to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others. Relationships with pupils will be based on mutual respect and trust so that pupils will have confidence in the school staff. Teachers will be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to pupils who disclose incidence of bullying and investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying.

Teachers will discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with the pupils and use behavioural management strategies which focus on problem solving and enable pupils to take an active role in finding a solution to problems.

The formal curriculum of the school will also be used to educate all pupils against bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying issues may be raised through the school religion programme, the Social Personal and Health Education programme, the Stay Safe Programme, the Arts and/or Circle time.

Staff members will continue to up skill by attending Anti bullying courses including

Cyber Bullying & E- Safety as they become available at Mayo Education Centre or other providers.

- **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to be tolerant and to have mutual respect for each other. Pupils should report incidents of bullying to their teachers (if bullying occurs at school) and their parents (if bullying occurs out of school)

- **Parents**

Encourage positive behaviour /attitudes and discourage negative behaviour/attitudes both at home and at school.

Encourage children to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression.

Encourage children to share, to be kind, to be caring, and to be understanding towards others.

Watch out for signs and symptoms that your child is being bullied or is bullying others. Don't dismiss your instincts as being wrong.

Discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with her/him.

Support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat bullying.

Parents will be made aware of anti-bullying seminars including seminars on Cyber Bullying & E-Safety.

2. **Supervision: -**

Adequate supervision is provided on the yard at break times and in classrooms on wet days.

Pupils are supervised at arrival and dismissal times.

Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Bullying Incidents: -

Bullying incidents should be reported to the class teacher and/or the supervising teacher for investigation. This reporting should be done by the pupil or witnesses. All reported incidents which are serious or are part of a pattern of behaviour will be noted, investigated and treated as circumstances require. Serious cases of bullying will be reported to the Principal.

- Appropriate personnel will interview all of the students involved in a bullying incident.

- The alleged victim and alleged perpetrators of the incident will be spoken to separately and encouraged to solve the problem.
 - The alleged victim and perpetrators will be invited to write down any relevant details and the incident will be recorded. Written statements from all involved in the incident will be attached to the incident report sheet.
 - Others not directly involved, but who may have witnessed an incident(s) may also be interviewed as they can often provide valuable information, especially in situations where it is one person's word against another.
 - All interviews will be conducted outside of the classroom setting by two adults, where possible, and will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils involved.
 - Records will be kept of all incidents and of the procedures that were followed.
- Where the incident is deemed to be minor, a verbal warning will be given to the bully to stop the inappropriate behaviour, pointing out how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and trying to get her/him to see the situation from the victim's point of view. If deemed appropriate, parents may be contacted.
 - If the behaviour persists, the principal and the parents/guardians of the victims and bullies will be informed. Thus, they will be given the opportunity of discussing the matter and are in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs. Appropriate sanctions will be imposed in accordance with the code of discipline.
 - If there is a serious incident, perhaps repeated verbal assault or coercion, the matter should be reported to the Principal, parents will be involved and appropriate sanctions applied in accordance with the code of discipline.
 - Where the incident is deemed to be more serious (e.g. gross misbehaviour or physical assault), the Principal should be informed immediately and she will inform the Board of Management if necessary.
 - Offenders and victims of bullying may be referred to counseling.

Responding to Bullying

Support will be provided for anyone who is bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or other teacher, along with continuing support if necessary. A victim will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them.

The school will inform parents/guardians of what has happened and of the measures being taken to help them, encourage victim to report further incidences if they occur.

Help and support will be sought for a bully. This will include speaking with them to discover why they became involved, informing their parents/guardians and continuing to work with them in order to modify their behaviour. The school code of behaviour applies to bullying. The bully will be helped to see things from the victim's point of view. Bullies may be excluded from the playground at lunch break or subject to special monitoring procedures and if bullying continues they may be suspended in accordance with procedure.

Any pupil who is involved in retaliation against a pupil who reports bullying will be subject to the school code of discipline. Incidents of bullying will be used as opportunities for re-enforcing the anti-bullying policy of the school. Follow-up meetings may be arranged to assess progress and/or restore relationships.

Success Criteria: -

- Positive feedback from teachers, pupils and parents
- Observation of behaviour in classrooms, corridor and yard

Roles and Responsibilities: -

All school staff have a role to play in monitoring the implementation of this policy. Class teachers have a specific role to play in highlighting awareness of bullying and it's harmful effects.

Post holders will review this policy when necessary.

Parents should familiarise themselves with this policy and cooperate with the school in the implementation of this policy.

Pupils should abide by the anti-bullying policy at all times.

N.B. Please also refer to Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

Review

This policy was reviewed and amended, October 2021, as part of an ongoing overall review of school policies. The proposed amendments to this policy will be sanctioned (if appropriate) by the B.O.M at their next meeting.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____
(Chairperson BoM) (Principal)

Date: _____ Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1

Advice for Parents

Effects of Bullying

Bullying can affect pupils in many different ways. When pupils are bullied their lives may be made miserable. They may suffer injury. They may be unhappy about coming to school. They may lose self-confidence and self esteem, blaming themselves for the bullying. Some children may experience stressful symptoms such as stomach aches and headaches, nightmares or panic attacks. (This form of unhappiness is likely to affect their concentration and learning). If unchallenged other pupils can learn that bullying is a quick and effective way of getting what they want.

Indications of Bullying Behaviour – Signs and Symptoms

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school - requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school.
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, mitching.
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches).
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour. It may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress - stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.
- Spontaneous out-of -character comments about either pupils or teachers.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling her/him.

Those signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination, these signs warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the child.

What to do if your child is being bullied

- Discuss the experience with your child to find out the precise details of what has happened.
- Reassure her/him that you and the school will help her/him.
- Discuss with her/him what to do next - he may be able to suggest strategies for

dealing with it.

- Encourage her/him to tell his teacher.
- Contact the school as soon as possible.
- Follow-up to ensure that the matter is dealt with and resolved.

What to tell your child to do if someone they know is being bullied

- Tell his/her parents.
- Encourage the person who is being bullied to seek help.
- Tell a teacher.
- Reject bullying behaviour among your friends - tell them that it is wrong to bully.
- Help the bullied person to get away from the situation.
- Know and follow the school code of discipline.

What to tell your child to do if they are being bullied

- Tell the teacher immediately. Tell your parents when you get home.
- Help the teacher to investigate it. Tell a friend about what is happening.
- Tell the bully to stop.