



Lisnagry National School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

The school believes that its pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. The school also has a clear policy on the promotion of RESPECT for everybody where it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is important therefore that the school has a clear, written policy to promote this belief, where pupils and parent(s)/guardians are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly. This anti-bullying policy operates in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour, which is used to address isolated instances of anti-social behaviour.

Rationale

The policy outlined was put in place to;

To outline, promote and raise awareness of preventative approaches that can be used in response to reported incidences of bullying.

To outline procedures for noting and reporting instances of bullying behaviour To outline procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.

Definition

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, although not condoned, cannot be described as bullying. However when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying. Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those children who watch and less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by the group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up and it rarely sorts itself out.

TYPES OF BULLYING

PHYSICAL: This includes punching, kicking, pushing, hitting or spitting etc. This also includes damaging property of a victim.

VERBAL: Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling, abusive language, slander, slugging, threats etc.

PSYCHOLOGICAL: This includes isolation – exclusion from discussions/ activities, extortion – obtaining (e.g. money, lunch, sweets etc.) from a person by force or threat etc.



Combating Bullying and the Action towards Prevention:

Role of Staff

The principal and staff exercise constant vigilance in the matter of misbehaviour. Our aim is to prevent misbehaviour rather than control. Positive behaviour is always recognised, affirmed and sought.

Any complaints of bullying are dealt with quickly, firmly and fairly. The principal is informed of any instance of bullying.

Awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour is addressed in the classroom, at school assemblies, through the school policy on S.P.H.E and other informal occasions when the opportunity arises.

Pupils are taught skills and encouraged to report any incident of bullying.

The month of September every year is dedicated to teaching the stay safe programme and an awareness of bullying. These lessons are reinforced continuously throughout the year.

The children may also have the opportunity to disclose concerns regarding themselves or others in a comment box in the classroom.

Staff must note reports/concerns re bullying in either their classroom record book or the yard incident book if it happened on break times.

Maintaining awareness of Bullying as unacceptable behaviour

Awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour is addressed in the classroom, at school assemblies, through the school policy on S.P.H.E and other informal occasions when the opportunity arises.

Supervision

Insofar as is reasonably practicable school activities will be supervised and monitored at all times, with particular emphasis on those occasions when situations of bullying are more likely to occur, such as assembly time, play time and dismissal time.

Disclosure:

Children will be encouraged to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. They will be helped to differentiate between incidents of a minor nature and those that constitute bullying.

They will also be taught the difference between 'telling tales' and asking for help.

Advice for Pupils

Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is **WRONG**. Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.

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

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

Be assertive – shout **NO**. Walk away confidently. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.

Fighting back makes things worse– So don't fight back. **REPORT** to a teacher or parent(s)/guardians instead. If you need support find a friend and both of you speak to the teacher.

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

The 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.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED:

TAKE ACTION – Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own. If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult **IMMEDIATELY**. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.

Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

Advice for Parents

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 their normal standard, ask for money or begin stealing money.

Always take an active role in your child's education by enquiring how they are getting on. If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school **IMMEDIATELY**. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.

It is important to advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse. Log onto www.bullies2buddies.com for strategies.

Tell your child there is nothing wrong with him/her. It is not her fault that they are being bullied.

Make sure your child is fully aware of the School Policy concerning Bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help;

Lisnagry National School does not welcome Bullies.

Procedures for Noting and Reporting an incident of Bullying Behaviour

1. All procedures of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way pupils will gain confidence in reporting. This confidence factor is of vital importance.
2. Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils will be referred immediately to the Principal/Deputy Principal.
3. Parent(s) guardians of victims and bullies will be informed by the Principal/Deputy Principal earlier rather than later of incidents 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.
4. Non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, to the teaching staff.
5. In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally in the first incidence be raised with the staff member in question and if necessary, with the Principal.
6. Where cases, relating to either a pupil or a teacher remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the School's Board of Management (see Complaints Procedure).

Procedure for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying:

Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parent(s)/guardians. Such incidents will be 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 will speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this way:

1. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
2. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually and then the individuals are met as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone also has said.
3. If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
4. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, a meeting or discussion will take place with the parents or guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate to:
 - a) explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy
 - b) discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school.

SANCTIONS

The use of sanctions is an important element in the school code. They are used in a corrective way and are intended to help the child to change and improve his or her behavioural patterns.

The nature of the misbehaviour and the age of the child will determine the strategy to be employed

Disciplinary Actions and Sanctions to deal with Bullying:

Bullying is a serious misdemeanour and the sanctions applied are the same as those listed below for serious misdemeanours.

Apology to the victim

A record is kept. Pupil/s write an account of the incident/s that lead to the bullying behaviour and what they have learned from this episode in their lives

– Parents must sign this.

Pupils may be removed from activity if endangering self or others.

Pupil is sent to Principal/Deputy Principal and made aware that suspension could be a possibility

In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred the Principal/Deputy Principal informs parents.

Suspension procedures may follow if deemed necessary by the school authorities.

NOTIFICATION OF A CHILD'S ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should adhere to the following procedures when notifying the school of a pupil's absence;

The school should be notified of the absence on the first day the pupil returns to school

The reason for the absence should be notified to the class teacher

The absence should be notified in writing by *letter / using the school journal* Details pertaining to the absence, such as duration and reason, should be provided

Significant absences cause by ill health (i.e. absences longer than 10 school days) should be certified.

The school will inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more, where the child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular and when the pupil is removed from the school register

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Lisnagry National School on 10th March 2010.