

## Anti-bullying policy

- Bullying affects everyone, not just the pupils who bully and the victims. It also affects those other children who watch, and less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by group pressure.
- 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.

## POLICY RATIONALE

The School believes that its pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied.

The College recognises that all institutions, both large and small, contain some individuals with the potential for bullying behaviour. The College aims to minimise the occurrence of bullying by following a clear policy based on its integrated ethos. Within these bounds it is clear that bullying does not fit into this ethos and will not be tolerated.

It is important therefore that the College has a clear written policy to promote this belief, where both pupils and parents/guardians and staff are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly with the over all aim of solving both the cause of the problem and supporting the victim.

## WHAT IS BULLYING?

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

### a). PHYSICAL.

A child can be physically punched, kicked, hit, spat at, etc.

### b). VERBAL.

Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/social disability, or personality, religious persuasion, etc.

### c). EXCLUSION.

A child can be bullied simply by being excluded from discussions/activities, with those they are required to work with and/ or believe to be their friends.

### d). DAMAGE TO PROPERTY OR THEFT.

Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen. Physical threats may be used by the bully in order that the pupil hands over property to them.

### ACTION TO TAKEN WHEN BULLYING IS SUSPECTED.

If bullying is suspected we talk to the suspected victim, the suspected individual who is bullying and any witnesses. If any degree of bullying is identified, the following action will be taken:

Help, support and counseling will be given as is appropriate to both the victims and the pupils who bully:

We support the **victims** in the following ways:

- by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience With any teacher they choose.
- informing the victims' parents/guardians if the situation appears to require this.
- by offering continuing support when they feel they need it.
- by arranging for them to be escorted to and from the School premises.
- by following the course of disciplinary action outline below to help prevent more bullying.

We also discipline, yet try to help the **pupils who bully** in the following ways:

- by talking about what happened, to discover why they became involved.
- informing the pupils who bully' parents/guardians if the situation appears to require this.
- by continuing to work with the pupils who bully in order to assist them in overcoming those issues which may be causing their actions.
- By following the course of disciplinary action outline below to help prevent more bullying.

DISCIPLINARY STEPS: (taken in conjunction with counseling and support)

1. A suitable one off punishment will be organized relating to the incident
2. The pupils who bully' parents/guardians may be informed of the incident.
3. Additional punishment may be organized including community service and/or detentions.
4. The individual who is bullying may be excluded from the playground areas at break and/or lunch times.
5. If they do not stop bullying they will be suspended for a minor fixed period (initially one or two days).
6. If they then carry on they will be recommended for suspension for a major fixed period (up to five days) or an indefinite period.
7. If they will not end such behavior, they will be recommended for permanent exclusion (expulsion).

**Note** The nature of this disruptive behaviour may require that the SENCO is notified and that the steps pertaining to conduct and behaviour within the Code of Practice for students with special needs, are begun.

In some instances the College may be duty bound to inform the Police.

## APPENDIX I: Practical Advice and Procedures

### **Advice for Students:-**

#### **What to do:**

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

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

Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with pupils who bully in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

#### **If you know someone who is being bullied:**

- a) 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.
- 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, friends with a bully.

### **Advice for Parents:-**

- 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 their 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 etc.
- 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 action will follow.
- d) It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. 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.

## APPENDIX I: College Aims

### AS A COLLEGE WE:

- attempt to minimise opportunities for bullying.
- have an ongoing element within the PSE programme in which bullying is covered. This includes using the opportunity to discuss:
  - the college policy regarding bullying behaviour
  - aspects of bullying
  - the appropriate way to behave towards each other and to deal with problems as they occur.
- attempt to deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary.
- review situations on an ongoing basis to determine the degree of success.
- have a firm but fair discipline procedure. The college has few rules all of which are based on respect for others and our environment.
- attempt to be sensitive with relation to the use of teaching materials or equipment which give a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, sex, etc.
- encourage pupils to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people.
- treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from the College.

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