

Ballytober Primary School



Anti-Bullying Policy

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Bullying constitutes a form of abuse of a child by another child or young person. Bullying, whether intentional or not, is repeated and continuous behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable, insecure or threatened.

RATIONALE

We at Ballytober Primary School wish to ensure that all pupils are given equal rights, opportunities, respect and worth. In order to achieve this, our Anti-Bullying Policy clarifies to pupils, teachers and parents that bullying is completely unacceptable. We wish to encourage an environment where individuals can develop happily and without fear.

SYMPTOMS AND FORMS OF BULLYING

Although not exhaustive, symptoms may include the following behavioural changes:

- Withdrawal
- Lack of concentration
- Deterioration in schoolwork
- Absenteeism or wish not to attend school
- Cyber bullying – nasty text messages, embarrassing or threatening photos or materials.

Forms of bullying can be roughly classified as:-

- **PHYSICAL** - hitting, kicking, spitting, taking or hiding others belongings, damaging possessions.
- **VERBAL** - threats, name calling (including sectarian, racist etc.), teasing, insulting, and writing hurtful notes.
- **EMOTIONAL** - being unfriendly, excluding someone from social groups, tormenting, spreading, rumours, giving looks
- **CYBER BULLYING** – nasty text messages, embarrassing or threatening photos or materials

If unchecked, bullying can cause profound long and short-term damage to the victim, emotionally, physically or both, and can seriously disrupt the capacity to learn or develop. People react in varying ways to bullying, and it may not always be possible to tell if someone is hurt or upset.

PROCEDURES

- i. In Ballytober Primary School, we aim to create an atmosphere where children who feel they are being bullied, or those who are aware of it feel that they will be listened to and that action taken will be swift and firm whilst at the same time, recognising their concerns. In the light of this, it is essential that the staff are made aware of any suspected incidents as soon as they arise.**
- ii. Bullying is considered to be a serious offence and will be treated as such. The bully must be made aware that the behaviour is unacceptable and has caused distress. The victim must realise that revenge or “taking the law into one’s own hands” is not appropriate in the situation.**
- iii. Every effort will be made to resolve the problem through talking to both parties, and, where appropriate, sanctions will be applied.**
- iv. Parents of both the victim and the bully will be informed of the situation and also how it has been dealt with depending on the seriousness of the bullying.**
- v. If the alleged bullying persists, further action will follow. Sanctions will be considered by the Principal in consultation with the relevant teacher, taking into account the nature of the incident. Where a pupil’s behaviour is persistent and defies the school’s attempts to address it satisfactorily by behaviour management or disciplinary methods within a reasonable period of time, then Child Protection or Expulsion strategies will be implemented.**

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – IMPLEMENTATION

PUPILS

If pupils consider that they are being bullied or if they think someone else is, they should inform a teacher immediately so that it can be dealt with. Not telling means that the victim will continue to suffer and the bully will carry on with his or her abuse. Everyone has a responsibility to make sure that bullying is not tolerated in this school.

PARENT

If a parent thinks his or her child is being bullied or if a child tells a parent that someone else is being bullied, the parent should tell the child’s teacher immediately. Parents should reassure their children that the matter will be dealt with sensitively and firmly. Where it is discovered that a child is being bullied or is directly involved in bullying, the parents will be contacted and informed of procedures.

TEACHER/STAFF

If a teacher or staff member thinks that bullying is occurring, they should discreetly talk to the pupils concerned and find out what is going on. If appropriate, the pupil should write a brief account of the incident. The teacher should make a written statement in the Incident Book.

It is the school’s view that the most effective way of dealing with bullying is through the continued and determined action of all members of staff. Staff need to be vigilant at break and lunchtime in the playground, cloakroom and toilet areas when the best opportunities for bullying are presented. Teachers

and staff must also be aware of inappropriate language or actions by pupils both inside and outside the classroom, and try to prevent such behaviour.

SCHOOL SUPPORT AND AWARENESS RAISING

Pupils will be made aware of issues by:-

- i. Use of teaching methods, which encourage co-operative work as well as encouraging pupils to extend their relationships beyond a small group of close friends.
- ii. Dealing with bullying as a topic to explore why it happens and suggesting methods of dealing with it.
- iii. Using Assemblies, Religious Education, PDMU., Circle times and other curricular areas.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The policy will be reviewed as necessary.

ADVICE TO STAFF – DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING

AIMS

To stop the bullying again by encouraging both the victim and the bully to:

1. Think about their behaviour and the cause and effect of the bullying.
2. Find the solutions, if possible, to the problems themselves.

TALKING TO PUPILS ABOUT INCIDENTS OF BULLYING

Try not to see yourself as the “rescuer” of the victim or “punisher” of the victim. Consider each pupil’s individual situation – the behaviour patterns of victims and bullies are often a result of values and experiences, which they bring to school from outside.

Support the victim by: -

- i. Making sure the pupil feels that he/she is being listened to.
- ii. Assuring the pupil that all incidents of bullying are taken seriously.
- iii. Reassuring the pupil by explaining how he/she will be supported and how the incident will be dealt with.

You may not be the person the pupil has initially confided in. If this is the case, try to involve that person as well. He or she will usually have been chosen because the pupil feels that they are someone who cares or can help and in whom they have trust and confidence.

Ensure the bully is dealt with fairly by: -

- i. Describing the reasons for your meeting with the pupil (at the same time, protect the victim and the identities of any witnesses).
- ii. Stay calm and non-judgemental to make sure that the pupil feels that he or she is being listened to.
- iii. Assuring the pupil that all incidents of bullying are taken seriously and that you disapprove of all acts of bullying, regardless of the reason.
- iv. Ensuring how he/she will be supported and how the incident will be dealt with.

GENERAL ADVICE

- i. Stay calm and non-judgemental when the pupils talk through their understanding of the problem.
- ii. Listen more than you speak. Don't assume that you know how a pupil feels or anticipate what they want to say.
- iii. Paraphrase what you are told to show that you understand what the pupils have said. It's how the pupil perceives the situation which is important; not how you perceive it.
- iv. Encourage the pupil, through your questions, to reflect on their own behaviour and the factors, which might have influenced the behaviour of others.
- v. Encourage the pupils to think of ways they can resolve the difficulties and avoid them happening again.

WHAT TO DO

As soon as the incident is reported to you, fill in the basic details in the Incident Report Form and consult with appropriate staff members.

Forms may be obtained from the Principal and should be returned to her when completed.

BENEFITS OF THE INCIDENT REPORT BOOK

This helps the school to: -

- Identify clear and consistent procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying.
- Monitor the progress of individual pupils.
- Monitor and review the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Discuss the incident with the pupils individually.

Try to help both the bully and the victim to: -

- See the situation from the other's point of view.

- Explore the causes and effects of the incident.
- Identify how the situation could have been avoided.

Further discussion will take account of the following points: -

- i. How the pupils will behave in the future.
- ii. The monitoring arrangements to be used to ensure that the problem doesn't reoccur.
- iii. Whether a punishment is appropriate.
- iv. Whether letting parents/guardians know about the incident is appropriate.

MEETING WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Whenever possible, involve parents/guardians in supporting rather than punishing the child. Ensure you have records of your concerns and evidence of the action taken to support the child. Be prepared to explain the anti-bullying policy and the rationale behind it. Explain consequences and possible action to be taken if bullying persists.

INCIDENT REPORT

Date _____

Child's Name _____

Reported by (if different from above)

Adult's Name

Brief details of reported
bullying _____

Witnesses (if any)

Action taken

Consultation with

Parents

☐

Governors

☐

EA

☐

Others

☐

(names) _____

Further action taken (if any)

