

Bullying

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both the victim and the bully will be personally contacted immediately bullying behaviour is identified.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated to the designated teacher for child protection, and team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the designated teacher within one week of making the complaint, including the investigation which has been carried out and the action being taken.

The sanctions taken against the pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but will include the loss of privileges or position of responsibility he /she holds in the school. His / her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped.

RESPONDING TO BULLYING

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the wilful, conscious and consistent desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else.

Typical Bullying Behaviour

- name calling
- casting aspersion on family members
- hiding, stealing or damaging the property of others
- ethnic remarks
- boycotting, rejection, social exclusion
- arranging to “get” someone after school

Teachers’ Response Strategies

1. Always respond to alleged bullying incidents
2. Interview the victim, the alleged bully and any bystanders
(5 ‘w’ questions)
3. Re-assure the victim that this is not his/her fault and that something will be done
4. Break up possible “bully allies” where more than one person is involved by not allowing allies to sit, play or dine with each other. This should apply both in class and in the playground.
5. Arrange care arrangements for the victim
 - set up peer group minding / protection / befriending
 - advise on places / situations to avoid

6. Discuss through circle time the issue of bullying
 - the effect on the victim
 - the contribution bystanders can make to defuse a situation
 - use role play to highlight the effects of bullying
 - the notion of “telling” must be taught as a positive strategy as distinct from mere telling tales

7. Sanction the Bullying Behaviour

This can be done without “bullying” the bully through the usual sanctions outlined in the school Discipline Policy

8. Record incidents of bullying behaviour in the class discipline books
9. Parental Concerns

In the event of complaints coming to your attention via a parent, it is vital to inform / reassure parents of the outcome of your investigations / actions. In this instance the Vice-Principal should be informed.

Peer Mediation Programme

Trained P7 Peer mediators are in the yards in the morning and at lunchtime. All P7 pupils undertake the Peer Mediation training and then are welcome to apply for the post of mediator. They then undertake an interview and suitable applicants are selected. Their role is to solve minor disputes in the yard, assist children who have no one to play with and be available to assist if a child feels they are being bullied. This is a very successful programme.

HOLY TRINITY’S ANTI BULLYING PROGRAMME

The members of the Pupil Council consulted their peers and then met and discussed how the pupils would define bullying. They then discussed ways of dealing with bullying incidents and how to reduce it in the school. They devised a child friendly anti bullying policy which is displayed in every area of the school.

We have devised a structured scheme to deal with bullying from P1-P7 with accompanying worksheets. November is the designated month to address the topic of bullying and it will be done through assemblies and the six week anti bullying programme.

CYBER BULLYING

Mobile phones are not permitted in school. If a child has a phone in school it will be confiscated and the parent will be informed. In school children are not permitted to visit chat rooms. Bullying committed through the internet/phone/text will be dealt with using the same procedures as mentioned above.