

Moycarkey NS

Title

Anti-Bullying Policy

Introductory Statement

The existing policy was reviewed in February 2010 with input from teacher's, pupils, parents and Board of Management. It was formulated at a staff meeting in February. Pupils in the senior end of the school were also consulted. The draft will be given to the parents association for their input.

Rationale

Bullying behaviour, by its 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 behaviour. (Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, DES, 1993)

It is necessary to revise the anti-bullying policy at this time as

It is a priority area identified by the school as the existing policy is due for review and amendment

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

In Moycarkey NS we endeavour to enhance the confidence and self esteem of everyone in the school community to imbue in the pupils respect for all people and property. We also encourage in them to be responsible citizens.

Aims

The school hopes to achieve these aims by introducing the policy:

To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.

To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.

To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all **areas of school activity are kept under observation**

To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.

To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in **bullying behaviour**.

To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti bullying behaviour.

Content of policy

This policy is addressed under the following headings.

1. Definition of bullying
- Indications of bullying
2. Strategies for prevention of bullying
3. Procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying
4. Board of Management
5. Reference to other policies

1. Definition of bullying

Dept of Education and Science guidelines define bullying as ... *repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, can scarcely be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying.* (Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 1993)

The school community will be made aware of this definition, through talks provided to the parents through the parents association. The children will be made aware of this through the Stay Safe

Types of Bullying

Pupil Behaviour

Physical Aggression:

It includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people up etc or anything that causes physical harm. It may also take the form of minor or severe physical assault. 'Mess fights', they can often be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Damage to Property:

Personal property can be the focus of attention for the bully; this may result in damage to clothing, school books and other learning material. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

Extortion: ????

Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out) in the event of the victim not promptly "paying up". Victims' lunches or snacks may be taken. Victims may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to the bully. Sometimes, this tactic is used with the sole purpose of incriminating the victim.

Intimidation:

Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it is based on the use of very aggressive body language, the voice may also be used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting to victims can be the so-called 'look' – a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

Abusive Telephone Callsitext messages:

The abusive anonymous telephone call is a form of verbal intimidation or bullying. Abusive text messages are also considered a form of bullying.

Cyber bullying:

The use of social networking sites e.g. Betio as a form of intimidation is also considered a form of bullying.

Isolation:

A certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the victim, by passing around notes about or drawings of the victim or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard.

Name Calling:

Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s), which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour.

Slagging:

This behaviour usually refers to the good-natured banter which goes on as part of the normal social interchange between people. However, when this slagging extends to very personal remarks aimed again and again at the one individual, then it assumes the form of bullying. It may take the form of suggestive remarks about a pupil's sexual orientation_

Bullying of school personnel.-

Bullying of school personnel by means of physical assault, damage to property, verbal abuse, threats to people's families' etc.

Refer to school policy on Sexual Harassment and adult bullying for dealing with cases of adult behaviour.

2. Indications of Bullying

Indications of Bullying/Behaviour - Signs and Symptoms

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

- u anxiety about travelling to and from school
- u unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, missing
- u deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- u pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches);
- u 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;
- u visible signs of anxiety or distress - stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- D spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- u possessions missing or damaged;
- o increased requests for money or stealing money;
- u unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing;
- u reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

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

3. Strategies for Prevention of Bullying

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

The school fosters a positive school ethos among pupils, staff and parents

There is a strong sense of community and cooperation between Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents, and each has a clear yet combined role in the prevention of bullying. The following is facilitated by the school:

- Through a programme of positive action, the school promotes an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance.
- The SPHE curriculum, including the Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes, is used throughout the school to support the anti bullying policy.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences/achievements, by acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others.
- Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated.
- Members of the BOM will be made familiar with the school's policy on bullying
- Parents contribute to and support the school's policy on bullying by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others, by communicating concerns to the school.

State how the school maintains awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour

Some practical ways in which the school emphasises that bullying behaviour is unacceptable are:

- Facilitate a common understanding among staff, pupils and parents on what bullying behaviour is. (Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 1993)
- Lessons to remind pupils of the school's anti bullying policy
- Use of both the formal and informal curriculum to emphasise that bullying is unacceptable, visual arts activities, posters, drama, role play, SPHE, cooperative games.

- Special events such as an 'Anti-bullying week' which would include displays in classrooms and other prominent locations
- Organise speakers for the parent body through the parents association
- Regular discussions with the children regarding behaviour on the bus to and from school

The following supervision practices apply in order to minimise any incidents of bullying:

- All sections of the playground are supervised at break times
- Corridors and toilets are monitored by the teachers on duty

4. Procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying

1. All reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher in a calm, unemotional and problem solving approach, so that the pupils will gain confidence in telling.
2. Incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation.
3. The teacher will speak separately to the pupils involved.
4. Answers will be sought to the facts of the matter i.e. who, what, where, when why?
5. Teachers record the details on the standard recording form (see appendix 1)
6. Members of a gang will be met individually and as a group.
7. If bullying has been established, the principal will be informed of any meetings that are necessary with parents/guardians of parties involved.
 - (a) The class teacher who may be accompanied by another teacher, will meet with the parents of the 'bully' and possibly the child him/herself, to talk about the alleged bullying and findings of any investigations done by the school. Breaches of the school code of behaviour will be explained to the parent and child and ramifications of such breaches. One on one programmes on social interaction may be used, especially in the case of younger children.
 - (b) The class teacher who may be accompanied by another teacher, will meet with the parents of the 'victim' and possibly the child him/herself, to talk about the alleged bullying and findings of any investigations done by the school. A combination of home and school activities may be used to boost the child's self esteem and coping strategies for the future.
8. The teachers involved will follow up on the situation through discussion with the child on an informal basis.

In rare cases if the incident remains unsolved at school level, the matter will be referred to the schools BOM and failing this, the case can be referred to the Dept of Education and Science.

If parents are aware of or feel that bullying is taking place in school, they are asked to inform the school as soon as possible, so that the school may take appropriate actions to investigate.

Under fair procedures and according to data protection and record keeping, the parents/guardians of the pupils involved may have access to these written accounts as requested (names deleted)

Non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the appropriate teaching member of staff.

5. Board of Management

'The Board of Management has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in a school. It should be supportive of the Principal Teacher in the application of a fair code of behaviour and discipline within the school'
(Circular 20/90)

The BOM was consulted in reviewing the anti-bullying policy and asked for feedback on the draft

If the incident is unsolved at school level, the matter will be referred to the schools BOM who will deal with it accordingly.

6. Reference to other policies

The following school policies have a bearing on the anti-bullying policy:

- SPHE plan
- Code of Behaviour
- Record keeping
- Health & Safety
- Special Educational Needs

Success Criteria

Indicators of the success of the policy are as follows:

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents, pupils
- Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, corridors, yard

Reduced incidents of bullying

Roles and Responsibility

The deputy principal and principal will coordinate and monitor the implementation of this policy. The class teacher has particular responsibility for their own class and to teach the Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes and to take part in anti-bullying week. Teachers have responsibility for appropriately reporting and recording any incidents of bullying that place during their supervision during yard time.

Pupils have responsibility for their own behaviour and adhering to the anti-bullying policy of the school.

Parents are expected to familiarise themselves with the school policy and to work with the school to ensure the school is 'A bully-free zone', through supporting the schools anti-bullying policy.

Implementation Date

This policy will be implemented in March 2010.

Timetable for Review

The policy will be reviewed on an on-going

basis. The policy will be reviewed on an on-going basis at least once annually. In reviewing the policy, types of bullying behaviour that may be happening in our school will also be reviewed and action taken as a result of these findings.

Ratification & Communication

The BoM officially ratified the policy on

Signed:

Bullying - School Record Form

Date:

Time:

Teacher:

Class:

Details of incident:

Who?

What?