

Killinchy Primary School



Anti-Bullying Policy

January 2017

Anti-Bullying Policy



Introduction and Definition

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

At Killinchy Primary School we wish to ensure that all pupils are given equal rights, opportunities, respect and worth. In order to achieve this, our Positive Discipline and Anti-Bullying Policies (updated in November 2016) clarify to pupils, teachers and parents that bullying is completely unacceptable. We wish to encourage an environment where individuals can develop happily and without fear.

Forms of Bullying

Forms of bullying can be generally be classified as:

- **PHYSICAL** Hitting, kicking, spitting, taking or hiding others' belongings, damaging possessions.
- **VERBAL** Threats, name calling (including sectarian, racist etc.), teasing, insulting, writing hurtful notes.
- **EMOTIONAL** Being unfriendly, excluding someone from social groups, tormenting, spreading rumours, giving looks.
- **CYBER** Any type of hurtful behaviour designed to intimidate or upset via the use of technology e.g. emails, mobile phones, social networking etc

Children often bicker or disagree therefore it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between a sporadic fight/disagreement and 'bullying'. For the purposes of this document, any of the above (or a combination thereof) which is noticeable on a repeated basis or in a regular pattern directed at one or more individuals will be classified as bullying and handled as such.

At K.P.S. we do everything we can to distinguish between the need to apply the actions/principles contained in the **Positive Discipline Policy** (in the case of a sporadic disagreement in the playground) and the need for the **Anti-Bullying Policy** (in the case of a repeated, targeted campaign of violence and/or intimidation from one pupil towards another (or several)).

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.

AGREED PROCEDURES

- 1) It is essential that the staff are made aware of any suspected incidents as soon as they arise;**
- 2) An investigation will begin immediately;**
- 3) If evidence of bullying can be found then the bully must be made aware that the behaviour is unacceptable and has caused distress.**
- 4) The victim will be made to feel safe and protected and must realise that revenge or "taking the law into one's own hands" is not appropriate in the situation.**

- 5) **Every effort will be made to resolve the problem through talking to both parties, and, where appropriate, sanctions will be applied as per the Positive Discipline Policy.**
- 6) **Parents of both the victim and the bully will be informed of the situation and also how it has been dealt with depending on seriousness of the bullying.**
- 7) **Detailed records will be kept and retained in the 'Behaviour File' located in the Staffroom.**
- 8) **If the alleged bullying behaviour persists, further action will follow as per the positive Discipline Policy. Sanctions will be considered by the Principal in consultation with the relevant teacher, taking into account the nature of the incident.**
- 9) **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.

Parents

If a parent thinks their 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.

Teachers/Staff

If a teacher or staff member thinks that bullying is occurring, they should discreetly investigate. If appropriate, the pupil should write a brief account of the incident.

The teacher should make a written statement and record in the **Behaviour File**.

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 how to cope with bullying through:

- Teaching methods which encourage co-operative work as well as encouraging pupils to extend their relationships beyond a small group of close friends.
- Dealing with bullying through P.D.M.U. to explore why it happens and suggesting methods of dealing with it.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The policy will be reviewed as necessary and in line with EA recommendations and through the School Development Plan.

STAFF CONDUCT - DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING

Aims

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

- Think about their behaviour and the causes and effect of the bullying.
- 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:

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

NOTE: 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

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

GENERAL ADVICE

- Stay calm and non-judgemental when the pupils talk through their understanding of the problem.
- Listen more than you speak. Don't assume that you know how a pupil feels or anticipate what they want to say.
- 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.
- Encourage the pupil, through your questions, to reflect on their own behaviour and the factors which might have influenced the behaviour of others.
- 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 File and place a copy into the Behaviour File.**
- Consult with appropriate staff members.
- Keep parents in the loop.

INFORM 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.