

## **Introduction**

The primary role of any school is to provide the highest possible standard of education for all of its pupils. To achieve this goal, a stable, secure learning environment is an essential requirement. Bullying by its very nature undermines and dilutes the quality of education and can impose psychological damage on those who are victims.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states:

‘Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence (physical and mental). They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them’.

## **DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

Bullying behaviour is defined as ‘deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend themselves’ (DENI 1999)

## **AIMS**

In Seaview we aim to establish an ordered, friendly environment in which children feel valued, secure and happy. We aim:-

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with teachers, pupils, parent/guardians.
- To enable pupils to articulate their fears and concerns and be confident that they will receive a sympathetic and supportive response from teachers and other adults within the school community.
- To create a school ethos which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To develop and implement strategies to minimise the likelihood of incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To offer support for those who are victims of bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To seek to influence attitudes of pupils to bullying behaviour, in a positive manner, through a range of curricular initiatives.
- To respond to the concerns of parents and inform them of follow-up action taken, aimed at bringing the bullying to an end for the victim and the bully.

## **TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

The following are unacceptable forms of anti-social behaviours which will only constitute bullying behaviours when there is evidence that the behaviour is recurrent/persistent, targeted, intentionally hurtful, and where a power imbalance between pupils is evident.

Types of unacceptable anti-social behaviours which infringe everyone's rights to be safe include:

1. Physical (includes jostling, physical intimidation, punching/kicking, any other physical contact which may include use of weapons)
2. Verbal (includes name calling, insults, jokes, threats, spreading rumours)
3. Indirect (includes isolation, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others, interfering with personal property) and includes Cyber-bullying: misuse of mobile phones and internet programmes to humiliate, threaten and/or isolate another.

**Unacceptable behaviours will be sanctioned in line with the Positive Behaviour Policy's procedures.**

## **EFFECTS OF BULLYING**

Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of self-esteem.

In spite of a positive and supportive climate within the school, pupils may still be reluctant to report instances of bullying, perhaps because they are fearful of the consequences. Both parents and teachers must therefore be vigilant and observant to detect changes in the mood and behaviour in a pupil and take early intervention.

## **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING**

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

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school;
- Unwillingness to go to school;
- Pattern of physical illness, eg. headaches, stomach aches;
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- Unexplained changes, either in mood or behaviour;
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress, eg. difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, and stammering.
- Possessions missing or damaged;
- Unexplained bruising, cuts or damaged clothing;
- Reluctance or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

This list is not exhaustive and there may, of course, be other causes for such behaviour. However, if signs or symptoms are repeated or occur in combination, then our school recognises that they warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

## **BULLYING IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

In Seaview we believe that prevention is better than cure. We ensure that opportunities are provided through the curriculum to reinforce the ethos of the school and help pupils develop strategies to combat bullying-type behaviour. An awareness of the issue of bullying is raised

in a variety of subjects including Literacy, PDMU, Religious Education and Art. Talks by the PSNI, NSPCC and the Newlodge Duncairn Community Partnership also address the theme of bullying.

Each child takes part in various Anti-Bullying activities during our annual Anti-Bullying week each November.

Children should know and understand the **Seaview Bullying Rules**

- Bullying is not allowed in our school;
- Everyone has the right to be happy in school;
- Tell the bully to stop;
- Tell an adult;
- Help other children who are being bullied.

### **THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF**

All members of staff must have a commitment to prevent or eradicate bullying. They should;

- a. Emphasis that bullying is not allowed in our school.
- b. Watch for early signs of distress;
- c. Always be willing to listen and when necessary take action. Any reported incident of bullying should always be taken seriously and investigated carefully.
- d. Interview bully and victim separately, where appropriate. Decide on an appropriate sanction for the bully in accordance with the Positive Behaviour policy. Advise Principal and/or Mrs Wray/SMT of serious or repeated incidents of bullying.
- e. Meet with the parents of bully and victim if necessary and inform them of action taken or intended to be taken. Keep a brief written record of each significant incident.
- f. Provide support and protection for victims by emphasising that it is not their fault and helping them to assert themselves.
- g. Meet with the victim and the bully on a regular basis to ensure that there is no further bullying.
- h. Refer pupils to school counsellor, where appropriate.
- i. Record incidents of actual or alleged bullying.

Teachers on duty at break time and supervisory assistants at lunchtime must be vigilant in providing constant supervision. These are time when some of our children feel vulnerable and bullying is more likely to occur.

### **THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS**

We ask parents to support their children and the school by:

- a. Watching for signs of distress in their child and being aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying;
- b. Taking bullying seriously and finding out the facts when told about an incident of bullying;
- c. Advising their child to report any bullying to their class teacher;

- d. Informing child's teacher if it is school bullying and about outside incidents which may have a negative effect on the child in school;
- e. Keeping a written record if the bullying persists: who, where, when?
- f. Devising strategies to help their child to assert him/her. Reassure child that there is nothing wrong with him/her which justifies bullying.

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