



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY GREYSTONES EDUCATE TOGETHER N.S.

This policy is based on the DES guidelines Countering Bullying Behaviour. It aims to produce a safe and caring environment in which all children can develop to their full potential. This policy operates in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour and the Dignity at Work policy.

The school does not tolerate or condone bullying of any form, or at any level of the school community. The Board of Management is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community - pupils, staff, and parents - are enabled to act effectively to deal with bullying. This policy guides action and organisation within the school for preventing and responding to bullying.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying may be defined as repeated acts of aggression; these acts may be verbal, psychological or physical and may be conducted by an individual or group against others.

Bullying may take many different forms such as physical aggression, damage to property, cyber bullying, theft of property, extortion, intimidation, abusive telephone calls, isolation, name calling, writing notes, emailing or texting. As a form of aggressive behaviour it is usually hurtful and deliberate. It is persistent over time and makes it difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It is important not to confuse bullying with isolated incidents of aggressive or antisocial behaviour. While isolated incidents must not be condoned either, it is when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it becomes bullying.

Prevention of Bullying

All members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying.

Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board is committed to providing time and resources for the implementation of the policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

School Staff

The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance. Children's self-esteem will be developed through: celebrating individual differences and achievements, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manner, and providing

opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school. Teachers will help pupils to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others. Relationships with pupils will be based on mutual respect and trust so that pupils will have confidence in the school staff. Teachers will be vigilant, will respond sensitively and caringly to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying and will investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying.

Teachers will discuss the school's Anti-Bullying Policy with pupils and use behavioural management strategies that focus on problem solving and enable pupils to take an active role in finding solutions.

The formal curriculum of the school will also be used to educate all pupils against bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying issues may be raised through the school RSE programme, the Social Personal and Health Education programme, the Stay Safe Programme, the Arts and/or Circle time.

The three R's will be taught....how to Recognise, Reject and Report bullying

Pupils

Pupils are expected to be tolerant and to have mutual respect for each other. Pupils should report incidents of bullying to their parents and teachers. Pupils will know the school's Code of Behaviour (to be found in their Homework Diaries).

We have the right to respect, and therefore the responsibility to act respectfully.

Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour, both at home and at school.
- Encourage children to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression.
- Encourage children to share, to be kind, to be caring, and to be understanding towards others.
- Watch out for signs and symptoms that a child is being bullied or is bullying others.
- Trust your instincts.
- Discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with your child.
- Support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat bullying.

Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Bullying Between Pupils

Bullying incidents should be reported to the class teacher and/or the supervising teacher for investigation. This reporting may be done by the pupil, parent or a friend. All reported incidents which are serious or are part of a pattern of behaviour will be noted, investigated and treated as circumstances require. Serious cases of bullying will be reported to the Principal. Reports of bullying behaviour on the way to and from school will be investigated by the Principal.

Responding to Bullying

Support will be provided for anyone who is bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or another teacher, along with continuing support when they feel they may need it. A victim will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them e.g. vigilance in the yard and record keeping of incidents.

Stage 1:

When a teacher first becomes aware that a child is regularly involved in incidents, he/she will start a record of such incidents.

The school will inform parents/guardians of what has happened, the measures being taken to help and encourage them to report further incidences if they occur.

Help and support will be sought for a bully. This will include speaking with them to discover why they became involved, informing their parents/guardians and continuing to work with them in order to modify their behaviour. The school Code of Behaviour applies to bullying. The bully will be helped to see things from the victim's point of view. Bullies may be excluded from the playground at lunch break or subject to special monitoring procedures.

Stage 2:

Should the actions taken at this stage prove not to have resolved the issue, the Principal will arrange to meet with the parents of the child who is seen to be bullying and separately with the parents of the victim of the bullying. The children themselves may be required to attend part or all of these meetings. The child who is bullying will be placed on report i.e. all areas of the child's behaviour (negative and positive) will be monitored by the teacher. The teacher may decide to include the child when deciding what is to be recorded that day. If progress is being made, the frequency of the meetings between child and teacher may be reduced.

The child who is the victim will also meet with the Principal and his/her parents. The aim of this meeting will be to address emotional needs and devise strategies for the child to deal with the bullying, e.g. conflict resolution management skills or sessions on **pshe** on **bbc.uk**.

Stage 3:

Should the behaviour continue, a programme of appropriate sanctions will be implemented by the Principal in consultation with the parents. Sanctions implemented will be to encourage positive behaviour and support the self-esteem of the child. These sanctions may include a period of suspension, which will be reported in writing to the Chair of the Board.

Any pupil who is involved in retaliation against a pupil who reports bullying will be subject to the school's Code of Discipline. Incidents of bullying will be used as opportunities to re-enforce the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. Follow-up meetings may be arranged to assess progress and/or restore relationships.

Bullying by Adults Within the School Community

Bullying can occur in any situation wherever two or more persons interact.

Bullying at work increases stress levels dramatically, and the common consequences of high negative stress are symptoms of depression. People may keep quiet, hoping it will go away. Sometimes the bully does desist, but more often than not he/she does not.

Bullying is a behaviour which everyone has the capacity to exhibit. A bully, however, will exhibit this behaviour all the time. It could be said that the desire to control, dominate and subjugate is itself an admission of inferiority, inadequacy, weakness and immaturity. A bully will get gratification by projecting failings and shortcomings onto others as a way of avoiding having to face up to, tackle and overcome faults in themselves.

The main criteria for selecting a victim are a) the person is good at their job, often excelling, and b) the person is popular.

Occasionally the bully will pick on trivial mistakes and deviations, anything which risks exposing the victim to his/her peers or superiors.

Acculturation is the greatest danger where there is an atmosphere of bullying. Over time, bullying can come to be seen as natural in the workplace.

Steps to Counteract a Bully at Work

Get advice from the Employee Assistance Service and see the INTO document 'Working Together'. Also refer to the school's Dignity At Work Policy for advice on the Grievance Procedure.



Resources

'Bully in sight'..Tim Field; 'Kick Bully.com (Adults)

Bye Bye Bully..J.S. Jackson; Bully For You...Child's play International (Children)

BBC programme on conflict resolution...www.bbc.co.uk/schools/website/4-11/site/pshe.html

Ratified by Board of Management:

Date _____

Signed _____

Addendum

Advice for Parents

Effects of Bullying

Bullying can affect pupils in many different ways. When pupils are bullied their lives may be made miserable. They may suffer injury. They may be unhappy about coming to school. They may lose self-confidence and self-esteem, blaming themselves for the bullying. Some children may experience physical symptoms of stress, such as stomach aches and headaches, nightmares or panic attacks (this form of unhappiness is likely to affect their concentration and learning). If bullying is unchallenged, other pupils can learn that bullying is a quick and effective way of getting what they want.

Indications of Bullying Behaviour - Signs and Symptoms

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

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school - requesting parents to drop or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school.
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, playing truant.
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches).
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour. This may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends, or particularly after longer school holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress - stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, insomnia, crying, lack of appetite, vomiting, bedwetting.
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers.
- Missing or damaged possessions.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising/cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance or refusal to say what is troubling her/him.

These signs do not conclusively mean that a pupil is being bullied – however, if repeated or occurring in combination they warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the child.

What to do if You Suspect Your Child is Being Bullied

1. Discuss the experience with your child to find out the precise details of what has happened.
2. Reassure her/him that you and the school will help her/him.
3. Discuss with her/him what to do next – he/she may be able to suggest strategies for dealing with it.
4. Encourage her/him to tell his/her teacher.
5. Contact the school as soon as possible.
6. Follow-up to ensure that the matter is dealt with and resolved.

What to Tell Your Child to do if he/she is Being Bullied

1. Tell the teacher immediately. Tell your parents when you get home.
2. Help the teacher to investigate it. Tell a friend about what is happening.
3. Tell the bully to stop - teach your child the appropriate way to do this, e.g. “I want you to stop saying that to me. I don’t like it, and I will have to report it to the teacher if it happens again”.

What to Tell Your Child to do if Someone They Know is Being Bullied

1. Tell a teacher (privately if necessary).
2. Tell his/her parents – they will contact the school.
3. Talk to the person who is being bullied - you may be able to help her/him.
4. Reject bullying behaviour among your friends - tell them that it is wrong to bully.
5. Help the bullied person to get away from the situation.
6. Know and follow the school code of discipline.