



Policy for
Anti Bullying

Definition of Bullying

The school accepts that bullying may be defined as the abuse of power by an individual or group in relation to another individual or group. It may be physical, sexual, verbal or psychological in nature. It may occur frequently or infrequently, regularly or irregularly but it should be taken seriously even if it has only occurred on one occasion.

Central to the definition of bullying are the intent and motivation of the perpetrator which will primarily be to exert power over another in order to cause distress.

Bullying is not a phenomenon which occurs solely between children. The above definition can also be seen to characterise some adult/adult, adult/child and child/adult relationships.

In more serious instances the abuse of power by an adult over a child, or by a child over a child, may be reviewed as child abuse and bullying should be seen within this context.

Entitlement

All children have the right to enjoy to the fullest possible extent the benefits of the educational provision offered by the school.

In order to maximise these benefits children need to be educated in an environment which :

- * is safe and caring;
- * provides challenges but is non-threatening;
- * encourages children to feel secure;
- * values children's opinions and involves them, where appropriate, in the determining of school policy and rules;
- * shows an awareness of children's individual needs and attempts to meet these.

The staff and governors of Our Lady Star Of The Sea believes that, when a child claims to have been bullied or is suspected of being bullied he/she is entitled to expect:

- * that he/she will be listened to in an appropriate setting and that every effort will be made to establish the facts;
- * that appropriate action will be taken to address the child's concerns and to ensure that there is no recurrence;

that the action the school intends to take will be made clear to the child and, if appropriate, the child's parents;

The governors and staff believe that children who are suspected of bullying another child are entitled to expect:

- * that he/she will be listened to in an appropriate setting and that every effort will be made to establish the facts;
- * to know what action the school can take;
- * to know what action the school intends to take.

The staff and governors believe that parents, too, are entitled to expect that:

- * their child will be educated in an atmosphere which is safe and caring and is not characterised by violence and intimidation;
- * the school will take reasonable steps to prevent bullying occurring;
- * any bullying incident which is reported will be investigated according to the school's guidelines;
- * any bullying incident which is found to have taken place will be dealt with in line with the school's guidelines.

The objectives of Our Lady Star Of The Sea with regard to bullying can be recognised as

- * encouraging a listening, telling and believing environment where the concerns of the individual are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately;
- * encouraging the view of the school as a community where each individual has an important and valued role to play;
- * minimising confrontation and encouraging mutual respect;
- * adults providing good models of behaviour for children;
- * developing a sense of common purpose between staff and pupils and parents;
- * a consistent use of clearly defined procedures for dealing with any inappropriate social behaviour;
- * providing a positive learning environment and appropriate curriculum for all pupils.

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF MEMBERS CONFRONTED BY BULLYING

1. Publicise the school policy on bullying (to those concerned).
2. Teachers need to be observant for signs of bullying. (see following guidelines).
3. React to signals.
4. Do not be misled by requests for confidentiality.
5. Re-assure the child(ren) that the problem will be handled sympathetically.
6. Explain the alternative courses of action and involve the child(ren) in decisions.
7. Refer to Head Teacher.
8. Support the child in crisis.
9. Investigate - is it genuine?
10. Monitor - closely record all incidents, observations in diary.
11. Record all incidents in your diary.

GUIDELINES ON DEALING WITH BULLYING

SIGNS WHICH MAY INDICATE THAT A CHILD IS BEING BULLIED.

1. Cuts, bruises or aches and pains which are not adequately explained.
2. Clothes or possessions belonging to the child are damaged or lost.
3. The child requests extra money or starts stealing.
4. The child starts going to school or returning from school at an earlier or later time or starts using a different route.
5. The child starts refusing to go outside at breaktimes or refuses to stay at school for school dinners.
6. The child requests to change classes, options or school.
7. Reluctance or refusal to attend school.

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

Any marked change in a child's behaviour, especially in well-established patterns of behaviour, may indicate that the child is under stress.

- * The child's behaviour may become immature, i.e. the child reverts to a previous behaviour such as thumb-sucking or tantrum behaviour.
- * The child may become withdrawn, clingy, moody, aggressive, unco-operative or non-communicative.
- * The ability to concentrate and school performance may deteriorate.
- * There may be sleep or appetite problems.

In some cases, bullying may be a cause of stress. In other cases, it may be family difficulties, the child may be abusing drugs or some other problem may be the cause. Whatever the case, sensitive enquiries need to be carried out and help made available to the child.

GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE BEING BULLIED

1. Come and tell.
2. We will be friendly.
3. We will listen to you carefully.
4. We will help.
5. We will try to :
 - * stop the bully
 - * find out the facts
 - * make you happy again.
6. We will write it all down.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS OF A CHILD WHO APPEARS TO BE BULLYING

We are committed to working with **all** parents to ensure that every one of our pupils is safe and happy in school.

BULLYING is when you are picked on by someone you are frightened of. It could be they hit you, call you names or make you do things you do not want to. It might happen every day or not very often but even if it only happens once it is **SERIOUS**.

The following guidelines may be helpful if a problem arises involving your child in any incidents of bullying.

What you can do

1. Make time to talk with and listen to your child.
2. Listen carefully to what they have to say.
3. Keep an open mind - there are two sides to every story.
4. Get in touch with us - do not try to tackle the problem alone.

What we can do

1. Meet with you as soon as possible to discuss the problem.
2. Fully investigate the issues.
3. Take appropriate action.
4. Keep you informed.

What we can do together

1. Create an atmosphere of trust and self-worth both at school and at home .
2. Communicate with each other regularly.
3. Be aware of any signs that show your child may be unhappy.

A booklet giving guidance to (a) parents and (b) pupils is given to each family when their child is admitted to our school.