

GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

RATIONALE:

Learning and teaching is enhanced when staff and students work together in a safe physical and emotional environment .

PURPOSES:

1. To work towards preventing bullying through vigilant practices and raising awareness through the school community.
2. To ensure effective management of bullying issues and incidents.

GUIDELINES:

This will be achieved by:

- 1.1 Vigilant practices out of class include, staff duty, lunchtime activity programmes, bus monitor.
 - 1.2 Vigilant practices in class include no put downs, effective classroom management, positive role models.
 - 1.3 Raising awareness programmes for students, parents and staff (including health programmes), will focus on definition of bullying, strategies and procedures for dealing with bullying incidents.
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- 2.1 The Guidance and Support team will be responsible for oversight of effective management of bullying including procedures, practices, monitoring, reporting and recording.
 - 2.2 Processes to deal with alleged bullying will adhere to principles of natural justice and fairness.
 - 2.3 Interventions may include 'no blame approaches' (eg mediation or restorative meeting) or disciplinary strategies (eg parental involvement, disciplinary action by Principal, referral to BOT).

REVIEW: These guidelines will be reviewed according to the Board of Trustees triennial programme of self review (2013)

DATE CONFIRMED: 1 JULY 2010

APPENDIX – Information About Bullying

A DEFINITION OF BULLYING:

Bullying is a conscious and wilful repetitive act of aggression and/or manipulation by one or more people against another person or people. It is also an abuse of power by those carrying out the bullying, which is designed to cause hurt or emotional harm. Bullying contains one or more of the following:

- Harm is intended;
- There is an imbalance of power;
- Bullying is often organised and systematic;
- Bullying is repetitive, occurring over a period of time; or it is a random but serial activity carried out by someone who is feared for this behaviour;
- Hurt experienced by a victim of bullying can be external (physical) or internal (psychological).
- Bullying can be either physical or non-physical;
- Physical bullying can include biting, hair-pulling, hitting, kicking, locking in a room, pinching, punching, pushing, scratching, spitting, or any other form of physical attack. It also includes damaging a person's property.
- Non-physical bullying can be verbal, which includes abusive telephone call or text messages, extorting money or material possessions, intimidation or threats of violence, name-calling, racist remarks or teasing, sexually suggestive or abusive language, spiteful teasing or making cruel remarks, and spreading false and malicious rumours.
- Non-physical bullying can also be non-verbal, which includes making rude gestures and mean faces; manipulating relationships and ruining friendships; purposely and often systematically ignoring, excluding, and isolating someone; and sending (often anonymous) malicious notes or emails.
- Sexual harassment, racist bullying, gang type behaviour, bullying of special needs children and bullying of persons with a different sexual orientation.

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS:**What students need to know:**

Students have the right not to be bullied in any way or by anybody. Bullying is harmful to everyone, in both the short and long term. No one has the right to bully anyone else. All cases of bullying brought to the school's attention will be taken very seriously, and all necessary steps to stop it will be taken.

In order to stop bullying happening, it is important for students to know that it is not only alright to tell, but also important to do so. The unwritten rule of the code of silence for many students is "don't tell adults about things that are occurring in your group", "don't rat on your mates'. No one has the right to be protected by their peers when they physically or psychologically abuse others.

If students are being bullied or know of instances of bullying, it is important to tell somebody. Bullying only gets worse if it is not stopped, so it is important to do this right away. You can do this by asking to speak to a teacher, by taking a friend in trouble to a teacher, by making an appointment with the Deputy Principal or another person you trust, or by asking your parents or a close family member to help you follow things up. All incidents of bullying brought to the school's attention will be investigated and will be taken seriously. In dealing with such matters, confidentiality for those concerned will be safeguarded.

A strong anti-bullying stance by students contributes in a major way to making the school a safe place. Another major weapon of those who bully is that they are sometimes 'tougher' than their peers, and individual bullies often have a small group who support and encourage their bullying behaviour. If most students decide that bullying is not acceptable and support each other in letting adults know or in intervening assertively and showing their disapproval, much of the bullying will stop.

What parents need to know:

If you know or suspect that your child is being bullied, contact the school immediately. You can contact your child's teacher, the Deputy Principal, or the Guidance Counsellor. We take bullying very seriously. All matters will be thoroughly followed up and appropriate action taken. We will also assure confidentiality in our contact with you. When the school knows or suspects that a child is being bullied, they will contact the parent(s) of the children involved, seek their advice, and support and keep them informed of progress with the handling of the bullying.

What staff need to know:

Bullying can grow to become very serious, or it can be nipped in the bud. If teachers know of bullying or suspect that it is occurring, they should report this first to the Deputy Principal. After discussion, it may be decided that the teacher can handle the bullying satisfactorily. A brief report is important so that the matter is on record: if another incident flares up later it can be seen as part of a pattern, not an isolated occurrence. This is not intended to label people as victims or bullies, but it is important to track bullying behaviour.

Because teachers cannot be everywhere at once, and because bullying is often a clandestine activity, it is important for teachers to encourage students to tell about bullying.

Strategies for Dealing with Bullying

