



“Friendship” policy

Introduction

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other children who watch, and less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by peer pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up, and it rarely sorts itself out. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating/threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society. No one person or group, whether staff or pupil, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at our school. Our commitment to “Rights respecting” issues clearly identifies our duty to protect children from bullying issues and we take this very seriously. [Article 19 \(protection from all forms of violence\)](#) States that Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and mistreatment

Why is a bullying policy necessary?

The school believes that our pupils have a right to learn in a supportive, safe and caring environment without the fear of being bullied. Again, this is clearly apparent as we are a “rights respecting school. All schools, both large and small, contain some numbers of pupils with the potential for bullying behaviour. If a school is well disciplined and organised, it can minimise the occurrence of bullying and help the children understand that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is WRONG and will not be tolerated.

It is important, therefore, that our school has a clear written policy to promote this belief, where both pupils, and parents/guardians are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.



The rights of the child

In our school we believe “rights” are things every child should have or be able to do. All children have the same rights and these rights are listed in the UN convention on the rights of the child. We have considered these rights in terms of what is best, and age appropriate, for the children in our school and in terms of what is critical to life and protection from harm. This policy reflects and supports our commitment to being a “rights respecting” school.

What is bullying?

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. It can be:-

-Physical

A child can be physically punched, kicked, spat at etc

-Verbal

Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/social disability, or personality etc

-Exclusion

A child can be bullied simply by being excluded from discussions/activities, with those they believe to be their friends.

-Damage to property or theft

Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen. Physical threats may be used by the bully in order that the pupil hand over property to them.

What can you do if you are being bullied?

Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon!

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is WRONG!
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard, but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- Be assertive – shout "NO". Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- Fighting back may make things worse. If you decide to fight back talk to a teacher or parent/guardian first.
- Generally it is best to talk to an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support. Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and which will not make things worse for you.

If you know someone is being bullied

- TAKE ACTION! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

As a parent

- Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.
- Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, how lunchtime was spent etc.
- If you feel your child may be the victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school IMMEDIATELY. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse!
- Tell your own son or daughter there is nothing wrong with him or her. It is not his or her fault that they are being bullied.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the school policy concerning bullying

As a school

- Organise activities in order to minimise opportunities for bullying e.g. provide increased supervision at problem times
- Use any opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying, and the appropriate way to behave towards each other e.g. the PSHE programme
- Deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary.
- Review the school policy and its degree of success
- The school staff will continue to have a firm but fair discipline structure. The rules should be few, simple and easy to understand.

- Not use teaching materials or equipment which give a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, sex etc
- Encourage pupils to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes a review of what friendship really is.
- Encourage pupils to treat everyone with respect.
- We will treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from our school.

Action taken when bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected we talk to the suspected victim, the suspected bully and any witnesses. If any degree of bullying is identified, the following action will be taken :-

Help, support and counselling will be given as is appropriate to both the victim and the bullies:

We support the victims in the following ways:

- By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their class teacher, or another teacher if they choose
- Informing the victims parents/guardians
- By offering continuing support when they feel they need it
- By taking one or more of the disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying

We also discipline, yet try to help the bullies in the following ways:-

- By talking about what happened, to discover why they became involved.
- Informing the bullies parents/guardians
- By continuing to work with the bullies in order to get rid of prejudiced attitudes as far as possible
- By taking one or more of the disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying.

Disciplinary steps

- Verbal check
- Rationalising, questions, discussion
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Reporting to deputy or head teacher
- Removal from class group
- Contacting parents
- Behaviour management programme
- Suspension
- Exclusion