

NEWBRIDGE EDUCATE TOGETHER NATIONAL SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Newbridge Educate Together National 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 - students, 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.

The wording of this Policy defines bullying in the child to child form. However, all incidents of bullying - child / child, child / adult, adult / adult and adult / child will be subject to sanction under the Code of Behaviour policy.

Definition of Bullying

The Department of Education and Science guidelines define bullying as ... *repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, can scarcely be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying.* (Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 1993)

Bullying may take many different forms such as Physical Aggression, Damage to Property, Theft of Property, Extortion, Intimidation, Abusive Telephone Calls, Isolation, Name Calling, Writing Notes, Emailing or Texting. As a form of aggressive behaviour it is 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 anti-social behaviour, which must not be condoned.

However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it becomes bullying.

Support can be offered to all parties involved.

Roles and Responsibilities

'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 and empowered to deal effectively with bullying.
- providing time and resources for the implementation of the policy.
- ensuring that adequate 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 where students' self-esteem will be developed through:
 - celebrating individual differences, achievements
 - acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners
 - providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school.
- help students to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others.
- base relationships with students on mutual respect and trust so that students will have confidence in the school staff.
- be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to students who disclose incidence of bullying and investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying.

- discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with the students and use behavioural management strategies which focus on problem solving and enable students to take an active role in finding a solution to problems.
- use the formal curriculum of the school to educate all students against bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying issues may be raised through the Learn Together Programme, the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme, the Stay Safe Programme, the Arts and/or Circle Time.

The Staff of our school, conscious of the need for a positive working environment, will encourage the involvement of the wider school community in the achievement of these ends through a 'whole school' approach whereby every individual is involved in the development of a school environment where each person is respected and valued.

Students

The students will:

- be tolerant of and have mutual respect for each other.
- report incidents of bullying to their parents and teachers.
- use positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour.
- solve difficulties without resorting to aggression.
- share, be kind, caring, and understanding towards others.

Parents/Guardians

Parents and Guardians will:

- 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, be kind, caring, and understanding towards others.
- watch out for signs and symptoms that your child is being bullied or is bullying others and act on these signs and symptoms.
- discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with their child.
- support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat bullying.
- inform the class teacher about any suspicions of bullying.

Strategies for the prevention of Bullying

Supervision:

School activities will be supervised and monitored at all times where practicable, with emphasis on those occasions when situations of bullying are more likely to occur, such as assembly time, yard time, play time and dismissal time.

Curriculum:

- The Stay Safe Programme will be taught in accordance with the SPHE policy.
- Time will be devoted to discussion on bullying at each class level, with particular emphasis being placed on re-affirming the children's sense of self-esteem. These lessons will be revised each year, they will be covered during SPHE or our Learn Together Programme.
- Students will be encouraged and helped to say No to bullying behaviour and to report experiences of bullying.
- Students will be taught that there is a difference between telling tales and asking for help.

Disclosure:

- Students will be encouraged to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. The difference between 'telling tales' about incidents of a minor nature and telling to 'stay safe' will be thoroughly explained.

Procedures for the Reporting of Incidents of Bullying

- Bullying incidents should be reported to the class teacher and/or the supervising teacher for investigation.
- This reporting may be done by the student, parent or another student.
- All reported incidents which are serious or are part of a pattern of behaviour will be documented, investigated and be dealt with as per agreed procedures.

Procedures for dealing with instances of Bullying

- (a) All alleged incidents of bullying will be recorded in an incident book which will be retained in the school.
- (b) Students will be informed that by reporting incidents of bullying they are acting responsibly.
- (c) A calm unemotional problem solving approach will be used to deal with bullying.
- (d) Alleged incidents of bullying will initially be dealt with by the class teacher. Answers should be sought to questions of What, Where, When, Who and Why.
- (e) On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher will first interview the victim/s and discuss the feelings which the victim/s experienced because of the alleged bullying behaviour. An interview will then take place with the alleged perpetrator/s. Members of a group should be met individually and as a group. Having discussed the negative impact which bullying has on both perpetrator/s and victim/s responsibility will be placed on all individuals within the group to resolve the difficulty and to take appropriate steps to ensure that it does not happen again.
- (f) The teacher will inform the principal and contact the parents of the children involved.
- (g) When the teacher has formed the opinion that bullying has occurred, and by implication that the standards of behaviour required in our school have not been met, s/he will follow the strategies for managing behaviour as set out in the NETNS Code of Behaviour.
- (h) Any student who is involved in retaliation against a student who reports bullying will be subject to the NETNS Code of Behaviour sanctions.
- (i) Any member of the school community who is unhappy with the process should refer to the NETNS Grievance Policy.

Implementation Date

This policy is to be implemented during September 2011.

Timetable for Review

This policy is to be reviewed during the school year 2011/2012

Ratification and Communication

The proposed policy will be communicated to members of the Board of Management prior to the meeting

of the BOM on 21st of June, 2011. Parents will be made aware on the website and in the newsletter that the policy is available for viewing on the website and by appointment in the school.

This plan was officially ratified by the BOM in June 2011.

References:

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.

- Department of Education and Science Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools (1993) available on DES website www.irlgov.ie/educ
- Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes
- Responding to Bullying. First Steps for Teachers. The Cool School Programme. (NE Health Board)
- Investigating and Resolving Bullying in Schools. The Cool School Programme. (NE Health Board)
- Stop it! Steps to Address Bullying. Wexford Education Network. Wexford Area Partnership. Phone: 053 23994
- Anti-Bullying Unit. Trinity College. Dr. Mona O Moore.
- Achieving Positive Behaviour. A Practical Guide. Patricia Dwyer. Marino

Ratified by:

Board of Management Newbridge Educate Together National School

Date: 21st of June 2011

Signed: *Chairperson, Board of Management*

Appendix 1

Types of Bullying:

Physical Aggression: includes pushing, punching, kicking and other forms of physical assault

Damage to property: results in damage to clothing, school books and other learning material, interference with or pilfering of contents of schoolbags etc.

Extortion: Demands being made for money often accompanied by threats. Victims may also be forced into theft on behalf of the bully.

Intimidation: Victims may be intimidated by use of aggressive body language and tone of voice.

Raised eyebrows in a classroom when a contribution is made by the victim.

E -bullying: Abusive telephone calls or text messaging is a form of intimidation and bullying.

Isolation: The isolation, exclusion, and/or ignoring of a victim by a group or individual, often accompanied by a campaign of writing insulting remarks either in the form of note or graffiti.

Name Calling: Persistent name calling of a hurtful, insulting or humiliating nature, often referring to physical appearance or academic ability, and repeatedly directed at one individual.

Teasing: When good-natured banter extends to personal remarks about appearance, clothing, personal hygiene or involves references of an uncomplimentary nature to members of one's family, it assumes the form of bullying.

Effects/Indications of Bullying:

Children who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety resulting in greater vulnerability accompanied by a reluctance to talk about what is happening to them, leading to behavioural changes and lowering of academic performance. The following are typical examples:

- Reduced ability to concentrate
- Poor or deteriorating school work
- Fear of going to or returning from school

- Loss of confidence and self esteem
- Aggressive behaviour
- Depression

ADVICE FOR PARENTS

Effects of Bullying.

Bullying can affect students in many different ways. When students are bullied their lives may be made miserable. They may suffer physical injury. They may be unhappy about coming to school. They may lose self-confidence and self-esteem, and blame themselves for the bullying behaviour towards them. Some children may exhibit stressful symptoms such as stomach aches and headaches, nightmares or panic attacks. (This form of unhappiness is likely to affect their concentration and learning). If bullying behaviour is unchallenged other students can learn that it is an effective way of controlling others and getting what they want.

Indications of Bullying Behaviour - Signs and Symptoms.

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

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school - requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school.
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, mitching.
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Pattern of physical illnesses (eg headaches, stomach aches).
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour. It may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after long school holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress - stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bed-wetting.
- Spontaneous out of character comments about either students or teachers.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising, cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling her/him.

Those signs do not necessarily mean that a student is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination, these signs warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the child.

What to do if your child is being bullied.

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

What to tell your child to do if someone they know is being bullied.

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

What to tell your child to do if he/she is being bullied.

- Tell the teacher immediately.
- Help the teacher to investigate it.
- Tell the bully to stop.
- Tell your parents when you get home.
- Tell a friend about what is happening.