

GUIDELINES ON DEALING WITH BULLYING

Reviewed November, 2019 by Mrs J Crissey

Ratified by Newbold School Board of Governors, December 2019

DEFINITIONS AND GENERAL COMMENTS

Bullying is intimidation, whether verbal or physical, which causes physical, mental or emotional distress to a victim who is not able to defend himself / herself. Bullying exists in all schools to a greater or lesser degree and is one of children's main concerns. Studies show that most bullies and victims have low self-confidence and self-esteem. Bullying is to be taken seriously.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES The following preventative measures are recommended:

- a) The administration and teachers should emphasize each child's individual value in the eyes of God and the school.
- b) The staff should create an atmosphere of concern and trust so that children feel they can share problems and worries with staff.
- c) School staff should address bullying issues early in the school (either in class or in an assembly).

The following should be included:

- d) Make it clear that bullying is not acceptable behaviour and will not be tolerated in the school.
- e) Encourage the children to report incidents of bullying as soon as possible after they happen. Emphasize that this is responsible behaviour and not "telling tales". Let them know the bully needs help to learn a better way.
- f) Teach the children to feel responsible for each other's safety. Help them to grasp the principle that there are no bystanders in bullying.
- g) The administration should ensure adequate supervision of the children at all times. If some areas of the school cannot be supervised at all times, spot-checks are helpful.
- h) Teachers should discuss bullying in class. Teach the children how to react to being bullied. (This is especially important in Year 6 to help prepare children for secondary school).
- i) All staff should be aware of the effects of "teachers-bullying". All pupils should be treated with a level of respect. No one should humiliate a child by making jokes at his/her expense.

2. SIGNS OF BULLYING

Staff should also watch for signs that a child is being bullied. These include:

- a) Fear of walking to or from school.
- b) Deterioration in school work

- c) A child becoming withdrawn or starting to stammer
- d) Unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts, etc.
- e) Unexplained loss of possessions or money
- f) Unexplained damage to a child's books or clothes
- g) A child refusing to say what is wrong or giving improbable excuses to explain any of the above.

3. DEALING WITH BULLYING INCIDENTS

In the case of a bullying incident staff are advised to deal with the situation as follows:

- a) If the bully is caught in the act, remove the victim from the scene as quickly as possible and tell the bully that he/she will be dealt with later. Don't be aggressive and don't intervene physically unless absolutely necessary.
- b) If a victim reports an incident to you, take it seriously and assure him/her that the matter will be dealt with swiftly. Ask for a written report (child's age permitting).

In both cases the following procedure should be implemented:

- a) Take the matter to the teacher who should deal with it as soon as possible and report it to the head teacher. Early intervention is important: failure to deal with the bully promotes further aggression.
- b) The parents of both victim and bully should be involved. Invite them to a meeting to discuss matters. If this is not possible, inform them of all discussions and decisions.
- c) The victim and the bully should be interviewed separately and then together, if at all possible.
- d) A record of all incidents and subsequent actions taken must be kept.

4. HOW TO DEAL WITH THE BULLY: SUGGESTIONS

- a) Help the bully to understand that his/her behaviour is not acceptable.
- b) Make the bully aware of the distress caused to the victim.
- c) Explore reasons for the bullying and ways to help the bully control his/her aggression. Help to find something he/she can do well which can foster his/her self-esteem. If the problem is deep-seated, outside help from a child psychologist may be required.
- d) Punish the bully, record the punishment and show the bully it has been recorded. Punishments should not involve aggression or humiliation.
- e) The bully should make amends for the distress caused i.e. an apology (public, private or in writing)
- f) An identified bully should be supervised very closely.

4.. GUIDANCE FOR VICTIM

If you are being bullied try to respond in at least one of these ways:

- a) You will be upset and bullies like to see this so try not to show them how badly they have affected you.
- b) Try not to react too much to the bully at the time, but make sure you can tell someone as soon as possible.
- c) Walk away quickly and confidently even if you do not feel that way inside.
- d) Try to be assertive – look and sound confident.
- e) If you are different in any way, be proud of it – it's good to be you.
- f) Avoid being alone in places where bullying happens.
- g) If you are in danger get away fast.
- h) You must tell a teacher if someone bullies you or makes your life unhappy.
- i) If possible try to avoid the bully.
- j) Try not to retaliate.

5. SUPPORT FOR BULLIES AND VICTIMS

It should be made clear to everyone in the school that they have the right to attend school without fear of being bullied. There should be frequent open class discussions around bullying. Pupils who take pride in their 'macho' image must be made to confront the reason for their bullying behaviour. There should be regular meetings where bullies and victims may meet separately or together to work through their problems with staff (within the circle-time group setting perhaps). Clear and explicit rules and corresponding courses of action must be agreed upon by all staff, pupils and parent representatives. Teachers to meet and discuss agreed procedures. Pupils will be encouraged to write their concerns on paper and hand it in to the class teacher. There should be an assembly on bullying once per term, Constructive supervision – having a chat to pupils while on duty, etc. can help the victims and the bully.

6. HOW TO HELP THE VICTIM: SUGGESTIONS

If a child reports an incident, never brush it aside. Take all reports seriously. Help the victim to see that what has happened is not his/her fault and he/she is not to blame. (Victims often feel that they are in some way responsible or that there is something wrong with them).