

Anti-Bullying in School Policy

The main aim of the Anti-Bullying in School Policy is to make sure that all stakeholders: students, parents, teaching staff and SMT understand what bullying is and what they can do when the need arises. The school has a zero tolerance approach to bullying and we take all cases of bullying very seriously.

What is bullying?

Bullying is an aggressive behaviour that involves power imbalance. It is an intentional desire to physically or emotionally hurt another human being. Bullying is not a one-time instance; it is in fact considered bullying when the behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying needs to be taken very seriously as both the children and adolescents who are bullied and those who bully others may need help.

In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must include:

- **An Imbalance of Power:** This can include physical size and strength, access to embarrassing information or popularity, used to control or harm others. Most often the bully targets people who are different or are perceived as being different. The power roles can change over time and in different situations, even if the situations involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviours happen more than once or there is the possibility that the particular behaviour will happen more than once.

Types of bullying

There are four main types of bullying:

- **Verbal bullying:** saying or writing mean comments. This type of bullying includes:
 - Teasing
 - Name-calling
 - Inappropriate sexual comments
 - Taunting

- Threatening to cause harm
- Abusive comments on a person's appearance, ability, clothes etc
- Malicious rumours
- **Social bullying:** involves hurting someone's reputation or social relationships. Social bullying includes:
 - Leaving someone out of a group, etc. on purpose
 - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
 - Spreading rumours about someone
 - Embarrassing someone in public
- **Physical bullying** involves hurting a person's body or harming their possessions. Physical bullying includes:
 - Hitting/kicking/pinching – using physical force to the detriment of another person
 - Spitting
 - Tripping/pushing
 - Taking or breaking someone's things
 - Making mean or rude hand gestures
- **Cyber bullying:** is quite a new phenomenon. It happens when a student is bullied by means of:
 - Messages, words or pictures that are transmitted by electronic means such as the internet, mobile phones and offend or hurt the feeling of others.

Effects of bullying

Bullying can affect everyone. Bullying is linked to many negative outcomes including effects on mental health, substance use, and suicide.

Students who are bullied can experience negative physical, school, and mental health issues. They are more likely to experience:

- Less participation in school activities and a decrease in marks. They are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school.
- Depression and anxiety, increased feelings of sadness and loneliness, changes in sleep and eating patterns, and loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy.

- Health complaints

Students who bully may do so because they feel insecure or because they were bullied themselves. These students are more likely to:

- Abuse alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults
- Be abusive towards their romantic partners, spouses, or children as adults
- Engage in early sexual activity
- Get into fights, vandalize property, and drop out of school
- Have criminal convictions and traffic citations as adults

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Incident Report

Teaching staff must keep a watchful eye on their students. If a teacher notices that a child is being bullied by another child they are to:

- Intervene and stop the bullying
- Report the case immediately to the Assistant head in charge of Wellbeing.
- The Assistant Head will talk to the teacher and the alleged victim. The Assistant Head will then separately speak to the perpetrator. If the Assistant Head feels that special intervention is required, she will then talk to the Guidance Teacher (if the case is in the Secondary) or the School Counsellor (in case of the Primary). If the case is still unresolved, the Guidance Teacher is to report back to the Assistant Head in charge of Wellbeing who will then refer the case to the Anti-Bullying Services.

In case the parents/guardians are reporting the bullying they are to:

- Contact the Assistant Head in charge of Wellbeing. It is not advisable for the parent/guardian to call the parents/guardians of the alleged perpetrator.
- In such cases the procedure that follows is the same as in cases referred by a teacher.

If the bullying is in the form of cyberbullying, parents/guardians are advised to inform the Assistant Head in charge of Wellbeing who in turn will inform the parents of the other students involved. In such cases it is recommended to file a police report.

Should the SMT have concerns about students' safety, they are to consult CSS and inform APPOGG.

Restorative consequences

A restorative consequence is different from punishing. It is a way how the offender is held responsible for her wrongdoings. This will be more likely to result in better behaviour and less chance of reoffending.

Prevention at School

As a school we do our utmost to prevent bullying. We work with the students to help them realize and understand the consequences of bullying. This is done through:

- PSD lessons in the primary and secondary school
- During Assemblies
- Through guidance and counselling sessions
- Most important of all by instilling a culture of respect, love and tolerance among all stakeholders