

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

The aim of the school is to provide a disciplined, caring and supportive environment in which all members of the school community are encouraged to attain their true potential.

This aim is expedited by:

- (a) the curriculum of the school which encompasses that which is laid down by the N.I. Curriculum and includes those other ranges of experiences offered by the school, in school time or as extra-curricular activities.
- (b) the climate of relationships, attitudes and styles of behaviour established in the school community.

POLICY STATEMENT ON BULLYING.

Abbey Primary School believes that **bullying is totally unacceptable** and that:

- everyone has a right to live work and learn without fear or threat of interruption or harm
- everyone has a responsibility to act with respect for others
- a culture should be developed which values positive relationships and promotes mutual respect.
- there should be a defined approach to bullying
- all bullying should be reported immediately
- every report of bullying will be treated seriously and in a sensitive manner
- there should be an immediate initial response and appropriate investigation and follow-up action when dealing with reported cases of bullying

AIMS OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to:

- assist with the prevention of bullying
- identify appropriate strategies for responding to bullying
- reduce the likelihood of incidents of bullying happening or being repeated.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is not always easy to define as it can take many forms and can be either short term or long term. Abbey Primary School would agree with the Department of Education's publication

“Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection” which defines bullying as “deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself.”

In other words, any behaviour that is the illegitimate use of power in order to hurt someone either emotionally or physically is bullying.

Bullying can be:-

- PHYSICAL - pushing, kicking, hitting, threats (i.e. “if you don’t give me your dinner money you’ll be sorry)
- VERBAL - name calling, persistent teasing, sarcasm, spreading rumours
- EMOTIONAL- exclusion from a group, ridicule, threatening looks and gestures, hiding belongings etc.
- RACIST - gestures, taunts.

Whatever the nature of the bullying, bullies generally pick on weaker children using intimidation to get what they want. Bullies are often unhappy, discontented children who use bullying as a way of trying to achieve popularity and friends. They have to learn that bullying in whatever form is totally unacceptable and that, if they continue to behave unacceptably, then there are consequences. It is important to have a policy with regard to bullying so that any incident can be dealt with quickly and effectively.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Although victims of bullies often remain silent, their behaviour at times may indicate that all is not well. Victims of bullying may suffer isolation and anxiety as a result of the threatening atmosphere that surrounds them.

Teachers and other staff members should look out for the signs such as:

- being frightened of walking to or from school
- a pattern of unexplained illness
- unexplained and unsupported absences
- loss of enthusiasm and interest in school
- a marked deterioration in academic achievement
- possessions or clothing damaged or missing
- unexplained cuts and bruises
- reluctance to say what is troubling him/her

Individually these signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. However if there is a combination or repetitive occurrence of these, then further investigation is warranted.

WHAT CAN SCHOOL DO?

Positive Strategies to be adopted by the school.

- promoting good discipline both in the classroom and the playground so that children are aware of the consequences of unacceptable behaviour.
- educating children about bullying as part of the Personal Development Programme or Health Education Programme and specifically through the Kidscape Programme which is carried out formally in P2 and P6/7 and informally in other years.
- educating the children through “Life Education Centre” to become more aware of the issues involved in bullying and how to deal with them.
- rewarding the children regularly for good behaviour to develop and maintain a sense of self worth.
- encouraging children to take responsibility for their own behaviour leading to increased independence and self-discipline.
- promoting acceptable standards of behaviour e.g. through pastoral-based assemblies on bullying and the use of the CAPS (Character Approach to Problem Solving) themes used on a monthly basis.

The school will also act positively in an endeavour to eliminate bullying in all forms by:

- encouraging children to speak out and inform an adult if they are aware of, or suffer from bullying.
- encouraging parents to inform the school if they know of any incidents of bullying
- recording and investigating as quickly as possible all reported cases of bullying.
- giving help, support and advice to the victim such as the assurance that it was not their fault.
- ensuring that pupils, parents and staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy on bullying.
- involving outside agencies for support and advice where appropriate.
- ensuring that appropriate records are kept.

WHAT CAN PARENTS/OTHERS WITH PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY DO?

1. Support the school’s code of conduct and ensure their children behave appropriately.
2. Develop a good working relationship with school staff.
3. Report incidents of inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, to the school.

WHAT CAN PUPILS DO?

1. Follow the school’s code of conduct.
2. Report incidents of bullying.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The **Code of Conduct** is based on a set of rights and their related responsibilities.

All pupils have the **right** to:

- be treated with courtesy, kindness and respect
- express feelings and opinions
- work and play in an atmosphere of harmony and co-operation
- feel safe and be secure in a caring and supportive environment
- expect that school rules are fair, fit for purpose, consistently implemented and respect the rights of all involved
- be valued for their individuality, including that of race, gender, cultural, physical or intellectual diversity
- learn in a supportive atmosphere

The following **responsibilities** support these rights.

Every pupil has a responsibility therefore to:

- treat others with courtesy, kindness and respect
- listen to others with mutual respect
- maintain a safe and secure school environment
- model and support school rules
- develop responsibility for their own actions
- value others for their individual differences
- work to achieve their full potential, whilst allowing others to do the same

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

1. Since we take the problem of bullying seriously, any reported incidents will be dealt with accordingly.
2. The problem may be reported by a child or parent to a teacher or supervisor who will deal initially with the situation. If deemed appropriate, the information will be passed on to the Vice Principal or Principal.
3. The designated teacher will investigate the incident(s) thoroughly, including separate discussions with both victim and bully. All relevant details will be recorded. The outcome of these discussions will be reported to parents.
4. The teacher(s) of the children concerned will also be made aware of the outcome of the investigation.
5. Sanctions will be imposed on children who engage in bullying. Their behaviour will be closely monitored over a stated period of time.
6. The school may seek the advice and support of the Educational Welfare Officer and Educational Psychologist through the Special Needs Code of Practice.
7. Appropriate records will be kept.

SANCTIONS

Refer to the Discipline Policy.

AN EFFECTIVE POLICY SHOULD ENSURE:

- a safe and secure environment for all.
- standards of behaviour where everyone takes responsibility to prevent and reduce bullying.
- procedures which are in place for reporting, investigating and following up incidents of bullying.
- that counselling and support are given to the victim and the bully.
- a consistent approach is used to deal with bullying.
- appropriate opportunities for training are made available to staff.
- monitoring, review and evaluation takes place as appropriate eg. in line with new legislation or advice.

LINKS TO OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

Pastoral Care

Discipline Policy.

Health Education Policy

Drugs Education Policy

Relationships and Sexuality Education

Home – School Liaison Policy

Policy on the use of Reasonable Force

Child Protection Policy