

Anti-Bullying Policy: Appendix 2 – Best Practice & Advice

The commitment of the Board of Management to the key principles of best practice are set out in the aims and objectives of the main policy document.

All members of the school community (including students, staff and parents/guardians) share responsibility to create and maintain a positive school culture and climate. The following are some practical tips for actions to build a positive school culture and climate to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour:

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach students what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve students in the development of these messages.
- Notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language inside / outside the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of students with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to students when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach students about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage students to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with students who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parent Teacher Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in student friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff should actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate outdoor supervision.
- School staff can ask students to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “peak times” for bullying in the school.
- Support the establishment and work of Student Council and committees.

Advice For Students Who Are Being Bullied:

- Passive (head down, ignoring) or aggressive (fighting back) responses have been shown by research to be least effective in combatting bullying.
- Be proud of who you are and show the person targeting you that they do not have power over you or your feelings.
- Stay with a group of friends / peers. There is safety in numbers.

- Be assertive. Tell them to stop and walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher if necessary or a member of staff. Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with the situation in a consistent way that will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you. All incidents of bullying will be reported to relevant personnel (see main policy for details). You will not be in trouble for telling about your situation.

Advice For Parents:

- Look for unusual behaviour in your children. Signs that your child may be a target of bullying may include:
 - suddenly not wishing to attend school and/or truancy
 - feeling ill regularly (stomach-ache, headaches etc.)
 - not completing work to their normal standard
 - anxiety about travelling to/from school (requesting lifts, changing routes, avoiding regular travel times)
 - unexplained changes in mood or behaviour which may be more noticeable before returning to school after a weekend or longer school holidays
 - visible signs of distress such as stammering, withdrawal, nightmares, changes in sleep patterns, unexplained crying or emotional outbursts, changes in eating habits
 - missing or damaged possessions
 - increased requests for money / stealing
 - unexplained or unusual reasons given for bruising, cuts or damaged clothing
 - reluctance or refusal to talk
- If you feel your child may be a target of bullying behaviour, inform the School immediately.
- Advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.
- Assure your son or daughter that you believe them and it is not their fault that they are being bullied.
- Ask your child about their feelings about reporting the bullying to the school and communicate this to the school (via Year Head/Tutor or relevant personnel).
- If your child may be involved in cyber bullying, keep all online / phone information as a record & closely monitor online activity. We ask that you do not contact other parents about these matters, as this can only complicate situations. Rather contact the school directly and relevant personnel will deal with any concerns and reports according to best practice guidelines.

If You Know Someone Is Being Bullied:

- Watching and doing nothing (being a bystander) is supporting and enabling the harmful behaviour and should not be an option.
- If you feel you cannot get involved directly, tell an adult immediately.
- Do not do things or say things because you are told to, if you know it is wrong and makes someone unhappy – do not do it.
- If you are not part of the solution – you are part of the problem.

If You Think You Are Bullying Someone:

A significant portion of bullying behaviour is not merely behavioural but is rooted in a lack of respect for diversity and in social inequalities. Students who engage in bullying behaviour often display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-discipline / esteem. Students who engage in bullying behaviour may lack remorse and an ability to empathise, convincing themselves that the target deserves the treatment they are receiving. Students who engage in such behaviours may also be attention seeking – to impress bystanders and to evoke reactions in others. However, it is also recognised that students who engage in bullying behaviour do not always intend to bully, or may not recognise the potential negative impacts/consequences of their words and actions on/for others.

Think before you speak/act – ask yourself:

- Is what I'm going to do, say / type fair or kind?
- Does it need to be said/done?
- Would I like it if it was said/done to me?
- If your answer to any of these questions is no – do not do / say / type it.
- Resist, walk away, say / do nothing.