

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



Rationale

In accordance with National Administration Guidelines it is incumbent on this school to ensure a physically and emotionally safe learning environment. This school defines bullying as the use of aggressive behaviour towards others with the intention of causing harm to them. Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, racial, homophobic and cyber misuse. Students who are victims of bullying face physical harm and emotional stress that may result in reduced learning opportunities, long term damage, or withdrawal or worse. Bullies themselves also may suffer long term harm. The school seeks to foster a climate of trust where students feel able to inform others of bullying in the knowledge that it will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Policy Statement

It is this school's aim that:

- all members of the school community - board, teachers, non-teaching staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- all members of the school community should know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- all students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- bullying will not be tolerated.

Procedures to be followed relating to incidents of bullying:

1. A victim of bullying may report the incident to any member of staff, or a friend.
2. All cases of alleged bullying will be recorded by staff responsible for handling the issue onto E-tap.
3. In serious cases parents will be informed and asked to attend a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary, at the discretion of senior staff, external agencies may be involved as appropriate.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be promptly investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. Reasonable attempts will be made to assist identified bullies to change their behaviour.
7. In cases of serious violence or extreme emotional harm the school has authority, and may exercise this authority, to stand-down, suspend or exclude in accordance with its behaviour management policy and Ministry regulations.
8. The school will investigate alleged bullying that occurs both within and out of school and will include cases of alleged cyber-bullying.

Policy Guidelines

In implementing this policy school management will:

- ensure that it is widely and regularly communicated to the school community
- always act in a consistent, professional and fair manner in dealing promptly with complaints of bullying

- take all necessary and reasonable steps to prove cases of bullying and to ensure that they cease
- provide appropriate training for staff in identifying and reporting on bullying
- use a range of proven techniques in enhancing the physical and emotional safety of the school; such techniques may include peer mediation, positive pathways programme, counselling, use of curriculum content etc
- provide support for students and awareness material for parents to assist them in recognising cases of suspected bullying
- survey students and parents periodically to evaluate the effectiveness of the anti-bullying programme
- monitor and review the policy annually
- provide termly reports to the board on progress

Signs of Bullying

This section is added to the policy in order to assist with implementation. Students may indicate by a series of signs that they are being bullied. The school should investigate when a student:

- is afraid when walking to or from school
- is reluctant to go to school
- doesn't want to go on the school bus, begs to be taken to school
- appears to change from usual routine
- starts to be truant
- seems to be withdrawn, anxious or lacking confidence
- starts to stammer
- runs away, threatens or attempts suicide
- has nightmares or cries in bed
- begins to underachieve at school
- complains of illness before school
- comes home with clothes torn or possessions damaged, graffiti on books etc
- asks for or starts stealing money
- frequently 'loses' money
- has unexplained injuries
- comes home hungry
- shows signs of aggression or disruption out of character
- is bullying sibling
- is afraid or reluctant to admit what is wrong
- gives unlikely excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use internet or mobile phone
- appears nervous or anxious when a cyber message is received