

# ST. BRIGID'S S.G.N.S.



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Brigid's S.G.N.S. has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, published in September 2013 and with DES circular 0045/2013.
2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

**(a) A positive school culture and climate which**

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

**(b) Effective leadership**

**(c) A school-wide approach**

**(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**

**(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies** (including awareness raising measures) that-

- build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;
- effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

**(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**

**(g) Supports for staff**

**(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour** (including use of established intervention strategies); **and**

**(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.**

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

***Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.***

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying, extortion, isolation, persistent name-calling
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

The list of examples below is non exhaustive.

#### **Examples of Bullying Behaviours**

<b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li><li>• Physical aggression</li><li>• Damage to property</li><li>• Name calling</li><li>• Slagging</li><li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li><li>• Offensive graffiti</li><li>• Extortion</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li> <li>• The “look”</li> <li>• Invasion of personal space</li> <li>• A combination of any of the types listed</li> </ul>
<b>Cyber</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation</li> <li>• <b>Harassment:</b> Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>• <b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name</li> <li>• <b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>• <b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li> <li>• <b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>• <b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>• <b>Cyber stalking:</b> Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> <li>• Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li> <li>• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>• Abusive text messages</li> <li>• Abusive email</li> <li>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles</li> <li>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identity Based Behaviours</b>  <b>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</b> (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).</p>	
<b>Homophobic and Transgender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation</li> <li>• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>• Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>
<b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>
<b>Relational</b>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malicious gossip</li> <li>• Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>• Ignoring</li> <li>• Excluding from the group</li> <li>• Taking someone’s friends away</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Spreading rumours</li> <li>•Breaking confidence</li> <li>•Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>•The “look”</li> <li>•Use or terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>•Harassment</li> </ul>
<b>Special Educational Needs, Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li> <li>• Mimicking a person’s disability</li> <li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are the class teachers and/or supervising teachers.
5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

#### Education and prevention strategies

##### **School-wide approach**

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils’ lives and the need to respond to it- prevention and intervention.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teachers
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of the student body in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.

- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school
- The implementation of regular (e.g. once per term) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal
- Encouraging a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Encouraging parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- Implementing the Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.

#### **Implementation of curricula**

- The full implementation of the SPHE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes as amended, updated or replaced from time to time.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
- Awareness-raising exercises each year in each class grouping where class teacher proactively explains the nature, variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying. Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm, rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. The aim is to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils and a positive sense of self-worth.
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Relational aggression**, **Cyber Bullying** ( Be Safe-Be Web wise, Web wise Primary teachers' resources), **Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying, Diversity and Interculturalism**.
- The prevention and awareness-raising measures will also deal explicitly with cyber-bullying in the middle and senior classes. The focus is on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, on how to stay safe when online and on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The role of parents is crucial in this.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

#### **Links to other policies**

- Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

### **Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying**

**The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);**

**The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.**

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

#### **Reporting bullying behaviour**

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the class/supervising teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the class/supervising teacher;

#### **Investigating and dealing with incidents:**

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the class/supervising teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the class/supervising teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;  
It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- In cases where it has been determined by the class/supervising teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in

which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;

- Where the class/supervising teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school

### **Follow up and recording**

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the class/supervising teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **Recording of bullying behaviour**

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

#### **Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred**

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. These records are to be kept locked in the teacher's filing cabinet. All incidents must be reported to the class/supervising teacher.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the class/supervising teacher, this teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- The class/supervising teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

### **Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred**

- If it is established by the class/supervising teacher that bullying has occurred, that teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The school office will collect such records at the end of the school year for storage in a ring-binder folder. Such notes may be needed during subsequent years.

### **Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)**

The class/supervising teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 1** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

b) Where the school (i.e. the investigating teacher in consultation with the principal and/or the deputy principal) has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the investigating teacher and a copy maintained by the principal. These will be kept in locked filing cabinets.

### **Established intervention strategies**

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews

Reference is made to the following intervention strategies:

[www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools Ken Rigby.pdf](http://www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools%20Ken%20Rigby.pdf)

- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice

Such strategies will be used by the school where relevant in the context of the primary school.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
  - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
  - Group work such as Circle Time



- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour. St. Brigid's School will request advice, when necessary, from our assigned NEPS psychologist.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher. In St Brigid's, we teach the slogan: BE AN UPSTANDER, NOT A BYSTANDER!

#### 8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and Practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early Intervention, where possible.

#### 9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations, under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender, including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016.

11. Once adopted by the Board, the policy is available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron, if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once every school year, generally around springtime. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and to the Department.

**ST. BRIGID'S S.G.N.S.**  
**BULLYING: A GUIDE FOR CHILDREN**

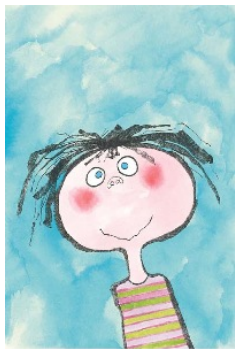
**What is bullying?**

Bullying can mean many different things. Bullying can take many forms, but its aim is always to make a person feel upset, intimidated or afraid.

These are some ways children and young people have described bullying:

- being called names
- being teased
- being pushed or pulled about
- being hit or attacked
- having your bag and other possessions taken and thrown around
- having rumours spread about you
- cyberbullying, with text messages or on social networking sites
- being ignored and left out
- being forced to hand over money or possessions

**Children may get bullied**



- on the bus
- on the way to and from school
- at school - in the playground, in class, etc.
- in organised extra-curricular activities
- when playing with others outside of school
- anywhere!

**What does it feel like to be bullied?**

Bullying hurts. It makes you scared and upset. It can make you so worried that you can't work well at school. Some children have told us they have skipped school to get away from it. It can make you feel that you are no good, that there is something wrong with you. Bullies can make you feel that it's your fault.

### **Why do some people bully?**

There are a lot of reasons why some people bully. They may see it as a way of being popular, or making themselves look tough and in charge.

Some bullies do it to get attention or things, or to make other people afraid of them. Others might be jealous of the person they are bullying. They may be being bullied themselves.

Some bullies may not even understand how wrong their behaviour is and how it makes the person being bullied feel.

### **Why are some young people bullied?**

Some young people are bullied for no particular reason, but sometimes it's because they are different in some way - perhaps it's the way they talk, their size or their name.

Sometimes young people are bullied because they look like they won't stand up for themselves.

## If you're being bullied what can you do?

Always remember - It's not your fault! It's the bully who has the problem, not you. Don't put up with bullying. Ask for help.

- **Believe in yourself.** Don't believe what the bully says of you. You know that's not true.
- **Say 'no' emphatically,** then walk away
- **Check out your body language.** Practise walking with confidence, standing straight with head held high and taking deep breaths.
- **Practise assertiveness.** Stand tall, look the bully in the eye, breathe steadily, speak calmly and firmly. This can help you to feel stronger, and also makes you look more confident.
- **Don't suffer in silence** - talk to someone you trust. It always helps to share a problem and to know that you are not alone. In schools talk to your teacher. Sometimes it helps if you write down what happened first. In schools and clubs, adults in charge will pay attention to any complaints you make about being bullied.
- **If an adult is bullying you, then look for help from another adult you can trust.** You have rights, and you must insist on them. There are rules and procedures to deal with adult bullies at home, in school, in sport clubs and where people work. If you are too nervous, take along a friend.
- **Choose when to resist.** Sometimes the only sensible thing to do is to give in, especially if you feel in danger. Just get away and tell someone. You can deal with the problem later.
- **Try not to use violence.** It never solves anything, and usually just makes the situation worse.
- **Keep a diary.** Keep a record of details - who, where, when, how - as this will make it easier for you when you tell your story.

- **Have an answer ready.** Well chosen words can often make a bully look foolish, and that's the last thing they want!
- **Try not to show you are upset or angry** (even if you are). Reacting to the bully is only giving them what they want.
- **If there's a gang involved try to approach each person on their own at a later time**, rather than when they're together. If you talk straight to them, you'll probably find that they're not so confident without the protection of the group.
- **Ask your friends to support you.** Bullies don't like being outnumbered or isolated.
- **Try to make new friends** if the ones you have at the moment seem to enjoy trying to make you feel bad.
- **Change your routine.** Try to avoid being on your own in places where you are likely to be picked on.

### **Are you a bully?**

- Have you ever hurt someone on purpose?
- Have you ever used your size or strength to win against someone weaker?
- Do you repeat rumours, even if you're not sure they're true?
- Have you ever tried to turn your friends against someone?
- Have you ever watched others bullying someone without doing anything to stop it?
- Have you ever used the excuse "I was only messing", when you knew you weren't "only messing"?

If answering these questions made you feel uneasy, maybe you should look at the way you treat other people.

### **Talking to someone always helps.**

Choose a trusted friend or maybe one of the organisations listed in the school booklet about bullying.

**Remember that bullying is ALWAYS wrong** – feeling good shouldn't mean having to make someone else feel bad.

## APPENDIX 2

### ST. BRIGID'S S.G.N.S. BULLYING: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

#### What is bullying?

Bullying can mean many different things. Bullying can take many forms, but its aim is always to make a person feel upset, intimidated or afraid.

These are some ways children and young people have described bullying:

- being called names
- being teased
- being pushed or pulled about
- being hit or attacked
- having your bag and other possessions taken and thrown around
- having rumours spread about you
- being ignored and left out
- being forced to hand over money or possessions.

#### Children get bullied



- in a variety of places

#### What does it feel like to be bullied?

Bullying hurts. It makes you scared and upset. It can make you so worried that you can't work well at school. Some children have told us they have skipped school to get away from it. It can make you feel that you are no good, that there is something wrong with you. Bullies can make you feel that it's your fault.

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Some bullies do it to get attention or things, or to make other people afraid of them. Others might be jealous of the person they are bullying. They may be being bullied themselves.

Some bullies may not even understand how wrong their behaviour is and how it makes the person being bullied feel.

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Some young people are bullied for no particular reason, but sometimes it's because they are different in some way – perhaps it's the way they talk, their size or their name.

Sometimes young people are bullied because they look like they won't stand up for themselves.

## Some research.....

Boys were found to engage in three times as much bullying as girls. Research found that the popular belief that bullies have underlying insecurity and anxiety is NOT always true. In fact, bullies often have a low level of anxiety. The typical bully has "an aggressive personality pattern" combined, at least in boys, with physical strength.

## Signs of bullying

### As an adult, what are the signs I should look out for?

One of the most terrible effects of bullying is that the victim will very often deny that it's happening.

It's important that you don't put even more pressure on a child who may be bullied. Forcing someone to tell when he or she does not want to can itself be a form of bullying. **But there are certain signs to look out for if you have suspicions.**

These can include:

- A change in behaviour, such as suffering a lack of concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, excessively clingy, depressed, fearful, emotionally up and down
- Afraid and anxious when going to or coming from school or other organised activities

- Happy at the weekend but not during the week. A drop in performance in school.
- Physical signs: stomach aches, headaches, sleep difficulties, bedwetting, bruising
- Bingeing on food
- Unexplained bruises
- School performance steadily getting worse
- Being generally nervous, tense, unhappy
- Not explaining suspicious incidents
- Signs of being isolated from others of the same age
- Signs of regular interference with personal property, books, etc.
- Frequently asking for (or perhaps stealing) money.

Although these can also indicate problems other than bullying, it's important that you don't ignore them. Try to encourage the child to talk about what's going on, either to you or to another trusted adult.

### **How to approach the subject**

- Broach the subject indirectly, giving the victim the option to talk about it or not
- Let them know that you are willing to listen at any time
- When they start to talk, listen carefully to what they have to say
- Once they begin to discuss the bullying, it may seem to be all they can talk about. Be patient and let them go on – it's better for them to let it all out than to bottle it up.

### **What to do next?**

- Don't over-react – victims need rational advice and help, not emotional overload
- Believe the victim. No one should have to put up with bullying.
- Ask victims if they have any suggestions about changing the situation
- Contact the school as soon as you're satisfied that the allegation is well founded
- Seek advice from an individual or a support group with experience in this area.



## If you're being bullied what can you do?

Always remember – It's not your fault! It's the bully who has the problem, not you. Don't put up with bullying. Ask for help.

- **Believe in yourself.** Don't believe what the bully says of you. You know that's not true.
- **Say 'no' emphatically,** then walk away
- **Check out your body language.** Practise walking with confidence, standing straight with head held high and taking deep breaths.
- **Practice assertiveness.** Stand tall, look the bully in the eye, breathe steadily, speak calmly and firmly. This can help you to feel stronger, and also makes you look more confident.
- **Don't suffer in silence** – talk to someone you trust. It always helps to share a problem and to know that you are not alone. In schools and clubs, adults in charge have to pay attention to any complaints you make about being bullied.
- **If an adult is bullying you, then look for help from another adult you can trust.** You have rights, and you must insist on them. There are rules and procedures to deal with adult bullies at home, in school, in sport clubs and where people work. If you are too nervous, take along a friend.
- **Choose when to resist.** Sometimes the only sensible thing to do is to give in. Just get away and tell someone.
- **Try not to use violence.** It never solves anything, and usually just makes the situation worse.
- **Keep a diary.** Keep a record of details – who, where, when, how – as this will make it easier for you when you tell your story.
- **Have an answer ready.** Well chosen words can often make a bully look foolish, and that's the last thing they want!
- **Try not to show you are upset or angry** (even if you are). Reacting to the bully is only giving them what they want.
- **If there's a gang involved try to approach each person on their own,** rather than when they're together. If you talk straight to them, you'll probably find that they're not so confident without the protection of the group.
- **Ask your friends to support you.** Bullies don't like being outnumbered or isolated.
- **Try to make new friends** if the ones you have at the moment seem to enjoy trying to make you feel bad.
- **Change your routine.** Try to avoid being on your own in places where you are likely to be picked on.

## **Are you a bully?**

- Have you ever hurt someone on purpose?
- Have you ever used your size or strength to win against someone weaker?
- Do you repeat rumours, even if you're not sure they're true?
- Have you ever tried to turn your friends against someone?
- Have you ever watched others bullying someone without doing anything to stop it?
- Have you ever used the excuse "I was only messing" when you knew you weren't "only messing"?

If answering these questions made you feel uneasy, maybe you should look at the way you treat other people.

## **Talking to someone always helps.**

Choose a trusted friend or maybe one of the organisations listed in this booklet.

**Remember that bullying is always wrong** – feeling good shouldn't mean having to make someone else feel bad.

## **What should I do if my child is being bullied in school?**

- Discuss bullying openly with your children – don't wait for them to raise the issue.
- Listen carefully
- Get all the details and record them in writing
- Thank the child for disclosing the problem. Confidence is the first casualty of bullying, so let your child know you believe them and will support them. Tell them it's not their fault.
- Listen carefully. Don't rush the story. Show you are concerned and sympathetic.
- Get all the details – what, who, when, where, etc.
- Write down the details and check the information with your child. This will be important with your child. This will be important for any meetings, which may come later.
- Take action – make an appointment immediately with the teacher
- Make appropriate changes that may help prevent your child being singled out and to build their confidence at the same time
- Encourage your child to carry herself/himself in a confident way. A child's self image and body language may send out messages to potential bullies.
- Seek professional help if necessary (e.g. speech therapy, dental work, etc.)

## **How do I approach the School?**

- Make an appointment.
- Speak to an appropriate teacher as soon as possible.
- Don't exaggerate. Be honest and stick to the facts, as you understand them.

- Accept that your child may not have told you all the facts, and that there may be another side to the story.
- Use your notes to make sure you don't forget to mention any important points.
- Recognise that you may be upset when you speak to the teacher.
- Look at school's policy on bullying.
- Find out what action the school intends to take.
- Arrange for a follow-up meeting with the teacher to measure any improvement in the situation.
- After the meeting, you may wish to make a note of what was agreed.
- Talk about the problem with your child. Encourage them to be open with you.
- You might like to use the school journal to update the teacher
- Continue to meet with the teacher at regular intervals, until the problem has been resolved.

### **How can I tell if my child is a bully?**

Here are some indicators of bullying behaviour:

- a tendency to bully family members
- being a victim of bullying
- regularly witnessing bullying behaviour in their environment
- being frequently short-tempered and/or aggressive
- having past experiences which can still cause negative feelings
- bringing home items that you know weren't bought
- speaking of others in a negative way, perhaps on the basis of their appearance or beliefs of social status
- showing an interest in violent behaviour
- showing little sensitivity towards others
- having low self esteem
- being the subject of previous complaints or suggestions of bullying behaviour

Although these can also indicate problems other than bullying, it's important that you don't ignore them. Try to encourage the child to talk about what's going on, either to you or another trusted adult.

## **APPENDIX 1: Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate**

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that we are taking to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times
- Explicitly teach pupils 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 pupils in the development of these messages
- 'Catch them being good' - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention
- Teach two short lessons (about 20 mins) a month about bullying/diversity/tolerance. Also having an anti-bullying poster competition to promote the theme around the school, e.g. "BULLY FREE – IT STARTS WITH ME"
- Also dealing with bystanders and changing them into 'upstanders': BE AN UPSTANDER, NOT A BYSTANDER!
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN
- Give constructive feedback to pupils 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
- How to respond to bullying. Teach the children CALM
  - **C**ool down
  - **A**ssert yourself
  - **L**ook them in the eye
  - **M**ean it
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use
- Follow-up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' 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 pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying 'hot spots' and 'hot times' for bullying in the school
  - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision
  - Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.

Support the establishment and work of student councils

**We aim to promote the positive elements of Friends for Life and Fun Friends Programmes throughout the school, which** "teaches participants to cope with their feelings and the feelings of others by training them to think more positively and to relaxed and regulate their bodies. Friends for life also teaches confidence and ways to tackle problems which helps build self esteem as participants start to solve problems they would have previously shied away from... Friends for Life is a social skills and

resilience building program that is recognised by the World Health Organisation for over 12 years of comprehensive research and as an effective means to prevent anxiety for children...”

## **Appendix 2**

### **Directory of Support Services**

Anti-Bullying Centre	(01) 6082573
CAB – Campaign Against Bullying	(01) 2887976
Childline Freephone	1800 666660
Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy	(01) 2300061
ISPCC	(01) 6794944
The National Association for Parents Support (NAPS)	(0502) 20598
Parentline (Parents under Stress)	(01) 8733500
Samaritans (Callsave)	1850 609090
Sticks and Stones Theatre Company	(01) 2807065
Trinity College Dublin – Anti-Bullying Research Centre	(01) 6601011
Victim Support	1800 661771

### **Some Useful Websites**

Bullying @ school information – [www.scre.ac.uk/bully](http://www.scre.ac.uk/bully)

Bullying information on Bully/Parents/Teachers [www.lfcc.on.ca/bully](http://www.lfcc.on.ca/bully)

Bullying in schools [www.ericeece.org/pubs/digests/1997/banks97](http://www.ericeece.org/pubs/digests/1997/banks97)

What Parents should know about Bullying –  
[www.accesseric.org/resources/parent/bully](http://www.accesseric.org/resources/parent/bully)

The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) - [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie)

The Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Support Service -  
[www.sphe.ie](http://www.sphe.ie)

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) - [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie)

National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie)

Safety on the Internet [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)

Gardai: Respectful online communication: [getwithit@justice.ie](mailto:getwithit@justice.ie)

Seán Fallon: [www.antibullyingcampaign.ie](http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie)

[www.teachingtolerance.org](http://www.teachingtolerance.org)

abc.tcd.ie (Anti-bullying centre TCD)

[www.bully4u.ie](http://www.bully4u.ie)

[www.antibullyingireland.com](http://www.antibullyingireland.com)

[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

Specialneeds, the bullyproject.com

[www.abilitypath.org](http://www.abilitypath.org)

[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie) - cool school program

[www.ispcc.ie/shield](http://www.ispcc.ie/shield)

[www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org)

[www.watchyourspace.ie](http://www.watchyourspace.ie)

\* [pacer.org/bullying](http://pacer.org/bullying)

\* [modelmekids.com](http://modelmekids.com)

\* [bullystoppers.com](http://bullystoppers.com)

101 great comebacks for bullies

*ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES FOR PRIMARY AND POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS 2013 (DES)*

*Guidelines towards Developing a Code of Behaviour 2008 (NEWB)*

*Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties - A Continuum of Support: Guidelines for Teachers 2010 (NEPS)*

*ABC Bullying at School, the Anti-Bullying Research & Resource Centre  
Trinity College, Dublin*

*Action Plan on Bullying: Report of the Anti-Bullying Working Group to the Minister for Education and Skills January 2013 (D.E.S.) NB Appendix 4*

*You Can Beat Bullying - A Guide for Young People, Kidscape*

*The abc of Bullying Marie Murray & Colm Keane, 1998 – Mercier Press*

*What do You know about Bullying, Pete Sanders, 2000 – Aladdin Books Ltd.*

*Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace, Lucy Costigan, 1998 – Columba Press*

*PDST Anti Bullying Prevention and Intervention Strategies Support Materials*

*Bullying – don't let them suffer in silence, Save the Children (Resource Pack)*

*Up 2 Us Anti-bullying Teachers' Handbook*

*My Selfie and the Wider World (Webwise Anti-Cyberbullying Teachers' Handbook)*



**Appendix 3: Template for recording bullying behaviour**

**1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Source of bullying concern/report -tick relevant box(es)**

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil(s)	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

**4. Location of incidents -tick relevant box(es)**

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other	

**5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern**

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Type of Bullying Behaviour - tick relevant box(es)**

Physical aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious gossip	
Name calling			
Other (specify)			

**7. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**8. Details of actions taken**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Relevant Teacher 1)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Relevant Teacher 11)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_

