

KILGARRIFFE NATIONAL SCHOOL

SCHOOL POLICY

PROMOTING POSITIVE & COUNTERING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

The Role of the School

- The role of the school is to provide the highest possible standard of education for all its pupils. A stable, secure learning environment is an essential requirement to achieve this goal. Bullying behaviour by its very nature undermines and dilutes the quality of education and may impose physiological and psychological damage. It must be positively and firmly addressed through a range of school-based measures and strategies.
- It is our aim to promote positive behaviour and prevent bullying behaviour. We promote positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all our members. Habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in our community are promoted. The school recognises the need to co-operate with parents, keep them informed and to continue to develop procedures to improve relationships within the school community.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility in co-operation with the Principal to act in preventing bullying behaviour by any member of the school. Aspects of our curriculum will be used to help form positive attitudes and values of tolerance, equity and respect for diversity among pupils.
- Where incidents of bullying occur we pledge ourselves to encourage a culture of "telling". Each report will be taken seriously, treated confidentially and the focus will be on resolving the problem.

What is bullying?

- Bullying may take the form of **repeated** aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.
- Bullying is an abuse of power. It is a repetitive attack which causes distress at the time of the attack and also by the threat of future attacks.
- Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, can scarcely be described as bullying. When the behaviour is **systematic** and **ongoing** however, it is bullying.
- **Any pupil can be a victim of or perpetrator of bullying**

Why do children bully?

It is generally accepted that bullying is a learned behaviour. Pupils who bully tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with low levels of self esteem.

Children become bullies for many reasons. Some of these reasons are:

- They may feel insecure and inadequate.
- They may be jealous of others.

- They may be bullied by parents or older children at home.
- They may feel powerful by bullying someone else.
- They may find it difficult to fit in with other children.
- They may have prejudices against other children who differ from them.
- They may feel they must succeed at all costs.
- They may be very spoiled and go totally unchallenged at home.
- They may be constantly humiliated by others and in turn do this to other children.
- They may be physically, sexually or emotionally abused themselves.

Types of bullying:

- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Isolation
- Persistent name calling
- Slagging of the persistent, hurtful kind
- Malicious Rumour/ Messages
- Physical Aggression
- Damage to property
- Bullying of School Personnel

Where can bullying happen?

Bullying can take place anywhere.

- In school, in class, in the playground.
- On the way to and from school.
- At activities outside of school.
- On the road/ street/ in the home etc.

Incidents of bullying: Signs and Symptoms

Not all victims of bullying will let on that they are suffering at school. Many feel that by admitting how bad things have gotten will increase their torment at the hands of the perpetrator(s). If they risk "snitching" they are afraid no one will believe or support them or are too embarrassed to admit what is happening. Reporting incidents of bullying that are observed or experienced first hand should be encouraged.

A child may be a victim of bullying if he or she:

- Is noticeably frightened or evasive when asked "What's wrong?";
- Suddenly loses appetite;
- Begins bullying or showing unusual aggression with siblings, playmates or other children;
- Comes home unusually hungry (may indicate lunch has been stolen);
- Repeatedly "loses" lunch, money or possessions;
- Has unexplained cuts, scrapes or bruises;
- Comes home with clothes dirty or torn, or books/other possessions damaged;
- Begins to perform poorly in schoolwork;
- Repeatedly claims to feel ill before going to school;
- Cries him/herself to sleep at night or suffers from chronic nightmares;
- Threatens or actually attempts suicide or other forms of self-harm;
- Attempts to or actually runs away from home;
- Begins stammering, appearing nervous and/or afraid to look people in the eye;

- Seems withdrawn, anxious or suddenly suffering from low self-esteem;
- Begins to skip school or begs to change schools or not to have to go to school;
- Makes significant changes to his/her usual routine;
- Begs to be driven to school so as not to have to walk or take the bus;
- Demonstrates marked fear or unwillingness to go to school or take the bus;
- Gives unlikely/ unconvincing excuses for any of the above behaviours

It should be noted that the above signs may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and looked into.

Overcoming Bullying Behaviour

How can we deal with bullying?

Bullying is intensely anti-social behaviour. It is best dealt with by preventative measures, self-esteem building, and a progressive strategy to report, treat and monitor incidents. If someone tries to bully us what can we do?

- ✓ We can let them know that what they are doing is bullying.
- ✓ We can refuse to join in with their bullying.
- ✓ We can support any pupils who are bullied.
- ✓ We can stand up for ourselves or for others if anyone tries to bully us by
 - telling them to stop
 - ignoring them
 - saying 'No'
 - asking a teacher or adult for support
- ✓ We can report bullying.
- ✓ We can respect people who are different from us whether that be in race, ethnic identity, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, social background or due to special abilities or disability. We can educate them to understand and overcome prejudice.

What to Report?

Any incident which you consider to be bullying which takes place in school, coming to or from school or during any school related activities, especially if you feel it is serious, ongoing or likely to happen again.

Why should I report it?

There may be more people affected than you know of. The consequences are often serious. You and all other pupils have the right to live and learn in an atmosphere free from intimidation and interference. Silence helps no one.

To whom should I report it?

- ✓ Any member of school staff
- ✓ A senior pupil whom you trust
- ✓ Your parents/ guardians

What will happen if I report it?

It will be taken seriously and the school will work to ensure that it stops.

How?

Your report will be discussed thoroughly with you in strict privacy. It will also be discussed with thoroughly with any other people involved. The people involved may be asked to fill out the bullying incident sheet. You may be given whatever help you need with this.

Will the bully be punished?

Our aim is to resolve the situation and prevent any repetition. Many people who bully are not even aware of how harmful and hurtful their behaviour is. Many incidents in this school and others have stopped when the people become aware of the results of what they were doing. If it does not stop, there may have to be punishment as it becomes a disciplinary issue.

Will people know that it was I who reported it?

No member of staff will reveal the name of anybody reporting any such incidents.

Who will deal with it?

The classroom teacher, the principal and a representative from the BOM are the people who will normally deal with a bullying incident.

School Procedure

- Since failure to report bullying can lead to a continuation or deterioration of bullying, the school and parents encourage children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. This can be with the class teacher, principal or parents. Children will therefore be constantly assured that their reports of bullying for themselves or peers will be treated with sensitivity.
- Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will be noted by the class teacher or principal.
- Incidents will be investigated – What? Who? When? Where? Why? Will help here.
- Serious incidents/ persistent problems will be reported to the principal/ BOM member
- If a gang is involved, they may be met both individually and as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said. This account may be oral or written.
- Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way and will be expected to assist in the investigation. Children should understand that there are no innocent bystanders where bullying is concerned.
- Parents will be made aware of this behaviour and requested to come and discuss it with the teacher/principal with a view to resolving the problem.

- The situation will continue to be monitored to ensure that the problem has been resolved.
- In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally in the first instance be raised with the staff member in question and if necessary, with the principal.
- Where cases, relating to either pupil or a teacher remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the School's Board of Management. If it is not resolved at Board level, the matter may be referred to the Department of Education and Science.

Parents/ Guardians Role

What can be done?

- It is important to be realistic. It will not be possible for a single child to assert his/ her rights if attacked by a gang. Children should be advised to get away and tell in situations such as this. Tell them you would have done the same in such a situation.
- Teaching your child to in a say "No" in a good assertive tone of voice and to carry him/herself in a confident way will help your child to deal with many situations. A child's self image and body language may send out messages to potential bullies.
- Children should be encouraged to talk about bullying and given an opportunity to express their concerns.
- Approach your child's teacher if the bullying is school related. It is important for you to understand that bullying in school can be difficult for teachers to detect because of the large number of children involved. Teachers will appreciate bullying being brought to light. School bullying requires that parents and teachers work together for a resolution.
- Very often parental advice to a child is to "hit back" at the bully if the abuse is physical. This is not always realistic as it requires a huge amount of courage and indeed sometimes makes the situation worse. Children should not be encouraged to engage in violent behaviour. Teaching children to be more assertive and to tell is far more positive and effective.
- Keep an account of the incidents to help you assess how serious the problem is. Many children, with a little help overcome this problem very quickly.

What if your child is a bully?

- Don't panic. This may be a temporary response to something else in the child's life, eg: a new baby, a death in the family, a difficult home problem etc. Give your child an opportunity to talk about anything that could be upsetting him/ her.
- Don't punish bullying by being a bully yourself. Hitting and verbal attack will make the situation worse. Talk to your child and try to find out if there is a problem. Explain how the victim felt. Try to get the child to understand the victim's point of view. This would need to be done over time.

- Bullies often suffer from poor self esteem. Use every opportunity you can to praise good, considerate, helpful behaviour. Don't only look for negatives.
- Talk to the child's teacher and try to find out more about the child's social behaviour. Enlist the teacher's help in dealing with this. It is important that you both take the same approach.
- If the situation is serious you may need to ask the school or your G.P. to refer your child to the child guidance clinic for help.

Reporting a "Bullying" Incident

Purpose:

1. To establish if this is a bullying incident. See definition of bullying (ongoing...)
2. To report and record such an incident and repeated incidents.
3. To deal with the effects of the incident in an appropriate way.

Procedure:

1. Talk to your child
2. Speak to the class teacher # } Informal
3. Speak with the principal
4. Refer incident to a Board of Management representative

5. Write to the Board of Management
6. Write to the Department of Education } Formal

Bring this completed form with you when speaking to the class teacher

When analyzing incidents of bullying behaviour seek answers to questions such as:

What happened? _____

Where? _____ When? _____

Who? _____ Why? _____

Has it happened before? _____ Where? _____

How often? _____ When? _____

What? _____ Who? _____

Why? _____

**Promoting Positive Behaviour
Anti-Bullying Charter**

1. Every pupil at this school has the right to enjoy his or her learning and recreation free from intimidation.
2. Our school is a caring community and any unkind actions or remarks will be taken very seriously. Bullying will not be tolerated.
3. We should support each other by reporting all instances of bullying. Good communication helps everyone.

If you are not part of the solution – you are part of the problem – bullying is too important to ignore.

Kilgarriffe National School, Clonakilty

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Kilgarriffe national school cherishes all pupils equally. To aid all pupils to achieve their full potential this Code of Behaviour, which cultivates respect for all, has been

devised. A high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school. It requires a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils.

In devising this Code of Behaviour consideration has been given to the needs and circumstances of Kilgarriffe National School. The school recognises the differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate these differences.

This Code of Behaviour aims to:

- Create an orderly environment in which the pupils can, through self-discipline, feel secure and develop progressively.
- Develop a proper sense of social behaviour and school discipline.
- Show regard for the safety, health and well-being of pupils, staff and all visitors to Kilgarriffe.
- Outline predictable and consistent sanctions where necessary.

Kilgarriffe National School has in place a code of conduct which is clearly displayed inside the main door and in each classroom. This code is referred to regularly.

Code of Conduct

The code of discipline aims to promote good communication, co-operation, respect and discipline in a safe and friendly atmosphere.

- ✓ Good manner and politeness are expected. Show respect for teachers, other adults and your classmates.
- ✓ Be punctual – arrive on time each morning.
- ✓ Wear correct uniform each day.
- ✓ All homework must be completed and handed up on time.
- ✓ AGGRESSIVE, VERBAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL OR PHYSICAL BEHAVIOUR IS NOT ALLOWED.
- ✓ Keep your hands, feet and comments to yourself.
- ✓ Obey the school bell and line up in an orderly fashion.
- ✓ RESPECT TO BE SHOWN FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY AND THE BELONGINGS OF OTHERS.
- ✓ Keep the school and school grounds litter free.
- ✓ Walk inside the school building.
- ✓ Chewing gum or mobile phones are not allowed in the school or school grounds.
- ✓ Be quiet and remain at desks if the teacher has to leave the room.
- ✓ Always allow others to work undisturbed.
- ✓ Abusive substances are not allowed.
- ✓ No long earrings, studs only.

Reported Bullying Incident Sheet

Purpose:

1. To establish if this is a bullying incident. See definition of bullying (ongoing...)
2. To report and record such an incident and repeated incidents.
3. To deal with the effects of the incident in an appropriate way.

Procedure:

1. Speak with the children involved
2. Talk to the parents
3. Refer to the Board of Management

Bullying Incident: Teacher Report Card

Bullying Incident Reported: _____

_____ Date: _____

Pupil spoken to: _____

Resolved: Further Action:

Talked to parents: _____

_____ Date: _____

Resolved: Further Action:

Referred to the BOM Date: _____