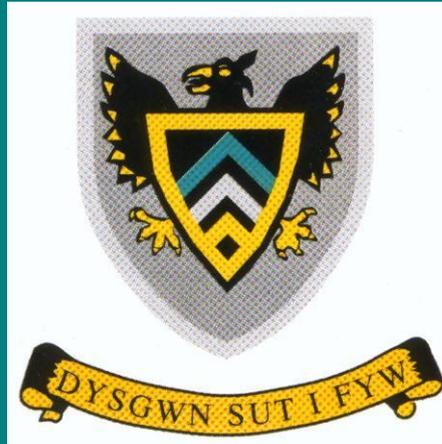


ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



SCHOOL POLICY ON BULLYING

OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHOOL POLICY ON BULLYING

1. To develop in the school a caring community, exercising concern and respect for the welfare of others and emphasizing the importance of good human relationships.
2. To establish an ethos and atmosphere within the school which will make bullying unacceptable.
3. To identify the causes and effects of bullying.
4. To develop a series of approaches which are designed to prevent bullying.
5. To deal with an incident of bullying as soon as it arises.
6. To clearly identify what is expected of all staff and pupils in order to achieve these objectives.

BULLYING – WHAT IS IT?

Bullying can be defined as overt or subtle intimidation of an individual, or group, with the willful or subconscious intention to hurt, threaten or frighten.

Bullying affects everyone: not just the bullies and victims. It also affects those other children who may witness violence and aggression and the distress of the victim. It may damage the atmosphere of a class and even the climate of a school. What is more, less aggressive pupils can be drawn into the taunting and tormenting of victims by group pressure and psychological factors.

Schools have a responsibility to create a secure and safe environment for pupils who are in their care so that parents may send their children to school in the confident knowledge that they will be protected from bullies.

The school, in its Mission Statement, states that we need to "develop, in the school, a caring community, exercising concern and respect for the welfare of others and emphasizing the importance of good human relationships".

The school motto 'Dysgwn sut I fyw' (We shall learn how to live) also reflects the Mission Statement. Thus bullying, whether overt or covert, is alien to these statements.

The single most important thing the school can do to prevent bullying is to have a clear policy to which staff, pupils and parents are committed.

WHAT FORMS DOES BULLYING TAKE? .

- (a) Verbal Name calling, taunting, cruel teasing, telling lies, threats, malicious gossip.

- b) Physical Threatening, slaps, assault, damage to personal belongings, extortion, coercing the victims into acts which they do not want to do.
- (c) Psychological Threatening, ignoring, 'sending to Coventry', extortion, ostracising pupils from their own peer group.

Both boys and girls use teasing as a method of bullying. The boys are more inclined to use more physical means of bullying whereas girls tend to be more inclined to use more subtle means such as exclusion from the social or peer group.

The incidents of bullying can be carried out by either individual pupils or groups of pupils. Male bullies tend to pick on victims from both sexes but female bullies generally and Predominantly bully other girls.

WHO ARE THE BULLIES?

There is no traditional stereotype bully. They come from all types of home background, from all races, from all cultures and from both sexes. They are found in the nursery schools right throughout the education sectors.

WHERE AND WHEN DOES THE BULL YING TAKE PLA CE?

- (a) Bullying can take place in a variety of locations particularly when adults or mature individuals are not present and it is not confined to the school environment.
- (b) Bullying need not last for long periods to cause pain and distress but the longer it continues the greater the suffering and damage caused.
- (c) Bullying can be carried out by an individual or a group. People who may not begin as bullies may join bullying groups as the individual may be afraid of losing the group's approval and become outcast or ostracised. Many bullies will thus try to involve other children in their activities.
- (d) Bullies tend to operate in secret places but often they feel quite confident that no-one will stop them and then they bully others in public places. The onlookers can then become part of the bullying process. The climate thus created can affect other children.

RECOGNISING BULLIES

The bully gets pleasure from other children's pain, fear and humiliation.

N.B. It is important that the following distinctions be made.

Bullying or Bossiness?

The bully usually focuses on younger, smaller or timid children; the bossy child will boss whoever is around at that time.

Bullying or boisterous play?

Play can turn to bullying when it spoils other children's activities, when violence or hostility is shown and when there is rough, intimidating behaviour.

Bullies tend to:

Have assertive, aggressive attitudes over which they exercise little control; They tend to lack empathy; They tend to lack guilt; they rationalise that the victim somehow deserves the bullying treatment.

Bullies can be the kind of pupils who are:

- Academically achieving less;
- Achieving as well as - if not better - than their peers
- Unpopular or insecure;
- Quite secure and happy.

RECOGNISING LIKELY VICTIMS

They may be pupils who:

- Are new to the class or school;
- Are different in appearance, speech or background from other pupils; Suffer from low esteem (this may be the cause or effect of bullying); Demonstrate 'entertaining' reactions when bullied;
- Are more nervous or anxious;
- The victim may just be the child who is in the wrong place at the wrong time and who reacts wrongly.

WHAT BECOMES OF BULLIES AND VICTIMS?

Active school policy will help to create a positive ethos. This can be the first step to help victims and bullies.

A successful bully will carry on bullying. This is likely to apply to physical bullying, threatened aggression and emotional and psychological forms of bullying.

Victims may suffer from emotional stress which can lead to a range of outcomes such as:

- Absenteeism;
- Under achievement;
- Childhood depression;
- Suicide;
- Victims may see themselves as inadequate and friendless, they may even believe that they deserve the treatment they receive.

APPROACH TO PREVENT BULLYING

The message should always be that prevention is better than cure. Children can doubt the adults' ability to stop the bullying and so can lack confidence in adults to help them when they are being bullied.

SUPPORTIVE ROLE OF STAFF

- (a) Children should be made to understand that the school cares about bullying and will deal with it.
- (b) Pupils must be encouraged to understand that they should speak out if they are, or know of someone who is, being bullied.
- (c) Time must be available for pupils to speak in confidence and in private to staff during form tutorials and personal tutorial sessions. It is vital that each pupil in school has a member of staff to whom he/she can confide.
- (d) All new pupils must be made aware of procedures, etc., and help must be given to ease their integration into school; all staff have an important role to play in this process.

PRE-SCHOOL PREPARATION

Bullying and ways of combating it should be included in the induction programme before pupils start in this school. Mention will be made of it in visits to junior schools and school policy will be emphasised on these visits and on induction days. Positive expectations of acceptable behaviour will be stressed. Contributory Junior schools will complete a proforma which will give details of pupils who have shown bullying tendencies and pupils who have been bullied.

SCHOOL CAMPUS

There should be regular checks and reviews of areas where bullying might take place. Form tutorials, etc., to be used to encourage pupils to adopt reasonable and sensible behaviour around the school premises at morning and lunch breaks. Possible areas around school where bullying might take place could be identified by pupils in discussion or in written exercises or on work-sheets.

FORM TUTORIALS, ASSEMBLIES AND CURRICULUM

- (a) Messages about positive, acceptable behaviour must be transmitted through the curriculum in the classroom lessons and in the programme of work used in form tutorials, personal tutorials and assemblies.

- (b) The use of initiatives from 'Skills for Adolescence' which suggest preventative tactics against bullying are incorporated into P.S.E. lessons and from the programme of work for some year form tutors.
- (c) Role play should be encouraged to develop feelings of empathy and awareness raising about the consequences of bullying.
- (d) Pupils could be asked to write anonymously about bullying and what should be done about it. Pupils' views are important.

COMMUNICATION

- (a) The school policy should be followed by all.
- (b) Parents will be informed that the school acts to prevent bullying, not just to deal with incidents.
- (c) Children will be encouraged to behave in a socially responsible and acceptable way. They are expected to build and develop good practices.
- (d) Watching pupils and analysing what pupils write will help find out who may be at risk and where they are at risk. This may also identify useful strategies.
- (e) Suggestion boxes will be conveniently located around the school and the contents will be regularly checked.

RESPONSES TO BULLYING - ADVICE TO STAFF

- (a) Take the incident or report seriously.
- (b) Remain calm, speak calmly, slowly and firmly
- (c) Be polite and objective.
- (d) Take action as quickly as possible. If an 'audience' is gathering, make every effort to hold the interview in private with those immediately concerned, once you have identified the pupils involved.
- (e) Get help if necessary or refer the incident, if of a serious nature, to a colleague if you feel unable to cope with the situation.
- (f) Reassure the victim(s) and do not make them feel inadequate or foolish.
- (g) Offer help, advice and support to the victim.
- (h) Make it very clear to the bully that you disapprove
- (i) Encourage the bully to see the victim's viewpoint
- (j) Punish the bully, but take care how you do this
- (k) Explain clearly the punishment given and why it is being given

(l) Inform others of the incident and action taken, the Head of Department and the Head of Year.

(m) Keep up to date anti-bullying logs with actions taken.