

SCHOOL POLICY DOCUMENT ON BOLLYING.

Bullying has been defined as a form of aggressive behaviour which is usually hurtful and deliberate. It is often persistent, continuing sometimes for weeks, months or even years. It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Underlying most bullying behaviour is an abuse of power and a desire to intimidate and dominate.

Studies have shown that bullying usually takes three forms:-

- (a) Physical, in which hitting, kicking and other means of physical attack are used;
- (b) Verbal, in which name-calling, teasing and racist remarks may be used;
- (c) Indirect, where rumours are spread and whispering campaigns are used. This form is often very subtle.

The effects of being bullied show themselves in many ways. Frequently, there is a loss of confidence and self-esteem, concentration and ability to learn is affected and stress symptoms will usually manifest themselves in various forms. For the child who bullies, the principal danger is the learning of a method which enables them to get very quickly what they want. It is considered that most pupils will experience bullying in some form, however minor, at some stage during their time in school.

Thus, it is the policy of this school to state clearly a set of agreed aims which provide teachers, pupils and parents with a well-defined set of procedures in order to deal with the problem of bullying within the school, should the need arise.

AIMS OF THIS POLICY.

- (a) To ensure that a caring environment is created within the school, where bullying behaviour is less likely to develop or be tolerated.
- (b) To promote open discussion of such behaviour by staff, pupils and parents in order to initiate an on-going process where various strategies will be used and evaluated and thus to counteract any tendency for bullying to gain acceptance.
- (c) To set in place procedures and guidelines which will give a clear sense of direction to staff, pupils and parents in dealing with this problem. Steps will be taken as outlined in Code of Discipline - Sanction No. 3.

STRATEGIES FOR THE PREVENTION OF BULLYING.

- (a) Teachers will endeavour to use the school curriculum to create discussion within the classroom of the many destructive aspects of bullying.
- (b) As studies have shown that many cases of bullying take place in the school playground during lunch breaks and in cloakrooms, special care will be taken by teachers on yard duty to note any such incidents and to deal with them promptly.

- (c) Pupils will be made aware that any form of bullying will be dealt with immediately and the sanctions to be imposed for inappropriate behaviour in the yard or classroom will be made known to them.
- (d) Teachers will give special attention to pupils who may be targets for this type of behaviour and be vigilant on their behalf.
- (e) Within the school, attitudes will be fostered which will help create a supportive climate where the code of secrecy surrounding bullying may be broken more easily. This will be achieved by the use of techniques such as class debates, discussions and questionnaires.
- (f) Parents will be aware of the school's policy and will give it their support. They will encourage co-operative behaviour in the home and at school. They will inform the school immediately should their child be bullied. If their child is the bully they will encourage and support the pupil in changing these patterns of behaviour.

REPORTING OF BULLYING.

- (a) All incidents should be reported to the class teacher initially.
- (b) In the case of an isolated incident the pupil involved in bullying another will be admonished by the teacher and through discussion and advice will be helped and encouraged to change. The pupil who has been bullied will be helped also to handle the situation in a confident way, assured of the support of the teacher and class.
- (c) In the case of persistent bullying, where no positive response or attempt to change behaviour seems apparent from the pupil involved, the Principal of the school should be informed and further action will be taken. At this stage the steps outlined in the Code of Discipline will be followed (Sanction No.3 (a) to (d)).
- (d) If the inappropriate behaviour is seen to continue in spite of these further steps, the matter will be brought to the attention of the School Board of Management and their help will be asked in solving the problem.

MONITORING AND REVIEW.

It has been stated that no case of bullying is ever straight-forward. Consequently our school policy document will be subjected to annual review and will be updated if necessary.