

## **Introduction**

The primary role of any school is to provide the highest possible standard of education for all of its pupils. To achieve this goal, a stable, secure learning environment is an essential requirement. Bullying by its very nature undermines and dilutes the quality of education and can impose psychological damage on those who are victims.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states:

‘Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence (physical and mental). They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them’.

## **DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

The legal definition of bullying as outlined in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 is: -

- (1) In this Act “bullying” includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of-
  - (a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,
  - (b) any other act, or
  - (c) any combination of those,

by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.

- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1), “act” includes omission.

## **AIMS**

In Seaview we aim to establish an ordered, friendly environment in which children feel valued, secure and happy. We aim: -

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with teachers, pupils, parent/guardians.
- To enable pupils to articulate their fears and concerns and be confident that they will receive a sympathetic and supportive response from teachers and other adults within the school community.
- To create a school ethos which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To develop and implement strategies to minimise the likelihood of incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To offer support for those who have experienced bullying behaviour and for those displaying bullying behaviour.
- To seek to influence attitudes of pupils to bullying behaviour, in a positive manner, through a range of curricular initiatives.

- To respond to the concerns of parents and inform them of follow-up action taken, aimed at bringing the bullying to an end for the pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour and the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour.

### **FORMS OF BULLYING**

- Any form of physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another pupil;
- Interfering with another pupil's property by stealing, hiding or damaging it;
- Using offensive names when addressing another pupil;
- Teasing or spreading rumours about another pupil or his/her family;
- Belittling another pupil's abilities and achievements;
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another pupil
- Hurtfully excluding others from a group;
- Ridiculing another pupil's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.
- Forcing others to act against their will.
- Cyber Bullying

### **EFFECTS OF BULLYING**

Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of self-esteem.

In spite of a positive and supportive climate within the school, pupils may still be reluctant to report instances of bullying, perhaps because they are fearful of the consequences. Both parents and teachers must therefore be vigilant and observant to detect changes in the mood and behaviour in a pupil and take early intervention.

### **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING**

The following may suggest that a pupil is being bullied: -

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school;
- Unwillingness to go to school;
- Pattern of physical illness, eg. headaches, stomach aches;
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- Unexplained changes, either in mood or behaviour;
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress, eg. difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating.
- Possessions missing or damaged;
- Unexplained bruising, cuts or damaged clothing;
- Reluctance or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

This list is not exhaustive and there may, of course, be other causes for such behaviour. However, if signs or symptoms are repeated or occur in combination, then our school recognises that they warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

## **BULLYING IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

In Seaview we believe that prevention is better than cure. We ensure that opportunities are provided through the curriculum to reinforce the ethos of the school and help pupils develop strategies to combat bullying-type behaviour. An awareness of the issue of bullying is raised in a variety of subjects including Literacy, PDMU, Religious Education and Art. Talks by the PSNI and NSPCC also address the theme of bullying. Resilience lessons are also taught in school by Barnardo's.

Each child takes part in various Anti-Bullying activities during our annual Anti-Bullying week each November.

Children should know and understand the **Seaview Bullying Rules**

- Bullying is not allowed in our school;
- Everyone has the right to be happy in school;
- Tell the person who is bullying you to stop;
- Tell an adult;
- Help other children who are being bullied.

## **THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF**

All members of staff must have a commitment to prevent or eradicate bullying. They should;

- a. Emphasise that bullying is not allowed in our school.
- b. Watch for early signs of distress;
- c. Always be willing to listen and when necessary take action. Any reported incident of bullying should always be taken seriously and investigated carefully and recorded on SIMS and CPOMS.
- d. Interview the pupil displaying bullying behaviour and the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour separately. Decide on an appropriate sanction for the pupil displaying bullying behaviour in accordance with the Positive Behaviour policy. Advise Principal, Vice Principal/Head of Key Stage and Miss McFerran of serious or repeated incidents of bullying. Record on SIMS and CPOMS.
- e. Meet with the parents of the pupil displaying bullying behaviour and the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour if necessary and inform them of action taken or intended to be taken. Record on SIMS and CPOMS.
- f. Provide support and protection for the pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour by emphasising that it is not their fault and help them to assert themselves.
- g. Meet with the pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour and the pupil who has displayed bullying behaviour on a regular basis to ensure that there is no further bullying.
- h. Refer pupils to school counsellor, where appropriate.

Teachers on duty at break time and supervisory assistants at lunchtime must be vigilant in providing constant supervision. These are time when some of our children feel vulnerable and bullying is more likely to occur.

## **THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS**

We ask parents to support their children and the school by:

- a. Watching for signs of distress in their child and being aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying;
- b. Taking bullying seriously and finding out the facts when told about an incident of bullying;
- c. Advising their child to report any bullying to their class teacher;
- d. Informing their child's teacher if the bullying has allegedly happened in school and about outside incidents which may have a negative effect on the child in school;
- e. Keeping a written record if the bullying persists: who, where, when?
- f. Devising strategies to help their child to assert him/herself. Reassuring their child that there is nothing wrong with him/her which justifies bullying.

Reviewed: May 2021