

Our Lady's Girls' National School, Ballinteer ***Anti-Bullying Policy***

Revised Anti-Bullying Policy:

This revised policy is based on the DES guidelines "Countering Bullying Behaviour" (1993) and was formulated as a result of staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management consultation. The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment. The school promotes habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among its members.

Aims:

- To produce a safe and caring environment in which all members of the school community can develop to their full potential.
- To provide clear guidelines for all the school community in dealing with bullying through a range of school-based measures and strategies for dealing with this behaviour.
- To provide an active Anti-Bullying Policy as an integral part of a written Code of Behaviour of this school.
- To create a school ethos which encourages children and staff to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.

Rationale:

The school does not tolerate or condone bullying of any form or at any level of the school community. The Board of Management is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community – pupils, staff, and parents are enabled to act effectively to deal with bullying. This policy guides action and organisation within the school for preventing and responding to incidents of bullying.

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying is a complex issue. It may be defined as repeated acts of aggression; which may be verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others. It thrives in an atmosphere of uncertainty and secrecy and needs a degree of collective vigilance by all in the school community if it is to be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner.

Bullying may take many different forms such as physical aggression, damage to property, theft of property, extortion, intimidation, abusive telephone calls, isolation, name calling, writing notes, exclusion, emailing or texting. As a form of aggressive behaviour it is usually hurtful and deliberate. It is persistent over time and makes it difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It is important not to confuse bullying with isolated incidents of aggressive or antisocial behaviour, which must not be condoned. However when the behaviour is systematic and on-going it becomes bullying.

Roles of whole community:

Role of the Board of Management:

- To ensure that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying.
- To provide time and resources for the implementation of the policy.
- To recognise that any person in the school community can be a victim of, or perpetrator of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying at all levels within the school.
- To deal with incidents appropriately as they arise through agreed procedures.

Role of the School Staff:

- To foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance by acting as role models for pupils.
- To develop self-esteem through celebrating individual differences and achievements with the children and colleagues on staff.
- To acknowledge and reward good behaviour and manners in the pupils and provide opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school.
- To help pupils to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others.
- To teach that relationships with pupils and staff will be based on mutual respect and trust so that pupils will have confidence in the school staff.
- To be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to pupils who disclose incidence of bullying and investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying.

The formal curriculum of the school will also be used to educate all pupils against bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying issues may be raised through the school **Religious Education** programme, the **Social Personal and Health Education** programme, the **Stay Safe** Programme, the **Arts** and/or **Circle time**.

Role of Non-teaching Staff:

Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, outside coaches, caretakers or cleaners should be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the appropriate member of staff e.g. the Deputy Principal.

Role of the Parents:

- To encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour both at home and at school.
- To encourage children to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression.
- To encourage children to share, to be kind, to be caring, and to be understanding towards others.
- To watch out for signs and symptoms that your child is being bullied or is bullying others.
- To learn not to dismiss your instincts as being wrong.
- To discuss the school's Anti-Bullying Policy with your daughter.

- To support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat bullying.

Procedures for Reporting and Investigation Bullying Incidents:

Any bullying incidents should be reported to the class teacher and/or the supervising teacher for investigation. Incidents may also be brought to the attention of the Deputy Principal. This reporting may be done by the pupil, parent or a friend. All reported incidents will be noted, investigated and treated as circumstances require. Serious cases of bullying will be reported to the Principal.

The following strategies are in place for dealing with unacceptable behaviour:

1. Reasoning with the pupil
2. Advice on how to amend behaviour
3. Referral to Principal Teacher
4. Communication with parents
5. Suspension (temporary)

Before resorting to serious sanctions e.g. suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Parents will be involved at an early stage rather than as a last resort.

Criteria for Success:

The following practical indicators will inform us of the success of this policy;

- Feedback from pupils, parents and members of staff
- Analysis of class records and parental complaints

Implementation and Review:

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in April 2016.

It was most recently reviewed by the Board of Management on the 3rd October 2017 and will be reviewed annually.