

## **BULLYING.**

### **Introduction.**

*St. Eithne's school aims to provide pupils with the educational experiences that will enable them fulfil their full potential. We also want every member of the school community to be valued and treated with respect and dignity irrespective of differences and to enjoy school in a happy and secure environment. The school's **Code of Behaviour** reflects the Christian values promoted within the school with an emphasis on the pastoral care of each pupil, the uniqueness and inherent goodness of the individual. It also reflects the Christian values of forgiveness, reconciliation, fair play, justice, new beginnings and hope.*

*However despite everyone's best efforts **bullying** can occur.*

### **Bullying ----- A definition.**

*In this school we see Bullying as a pattern of behaviour, not just an isolated incident, that causes a person to be unhappy in school. The victim is repeatedly on the receiving end of negative attention against his/her wishes. The bully/victim can be an adult as well as a pupil.*

*Bullying has been shown to have far reaching and detrimental effects on the educational, emotional and social development of children. It can also have devastating consequences on adults affecting their self-confidence, their performance at work and their interactions with others. Bullying can cause stress, anxiety and depression. It may occasionally result in suicide.*

**It is unacceptable that any person should be subjected to Bullying Behaviour.**  
**Forms of bullying.**

**1. Physical Aggression.**

*In girls it includes pushing, shoving, punching, pinching, kicking, poking and tripping people up.*

**2. Damage to property.**

*Damage to clothing, school books and other learning material. The contents of pencil cases, bags etc. scattered on floor; work defaced; on rare occasions coats stuffed down toilets.*

**3. Intimidation.**

*Children forced to do things; the use of aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting to victim can be the so-called **look**—a facial expression which conveys aggression or dislike.*

**4. Abusive Telephone Calls.**

*This form of bullying is more prevalent now that many pupils have their own mobile phones. Text messaging can be used to torment the victim even during the week-ends.*

**5. Isolation/exclusion bullying.**

*This form of bullying behaviour seems to be more common among girls. **The victim is singled out to be left out.** It can be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the victim in public places, spreading malicious gossip or by whispering insults about the victim loud enough to be heard.*

*“you are not my friend” can still be heard in 6<sup>th</sup> class.*

## **6.Name-calling.**

*Persistent name-calling which hurts, insults or humiliates is a form of bullying. Most name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance e.g. “fatzo”, “big ears.”*

*Academic ability at both ends of the spectrum can also provoke name-calling.*

*Hostility or negative comments about international pupils, Irish people of different skin colour and travellers are indicators of racism and bullying.*

## **7.Slagging.**

*If it extends to very personal remarks about the appearance, personal hygiene and sexuality of the victim( or a member of their family) then, **slagging** is a form of bullying.*

## **8.Evidence of assault or abuse directed at people from minority groups.**

### **Profile of the bully ----- The adult.**

*1.Authoritative and abrasive personality; can be aggressive and sarcastic .*

*2.Insensitive, lacking in empathy.*

*Adult bullying is usually hierarchical ,thus it is usually the Principal who is the greatest bully.. The Principal may be insecure in his/her position and see every suggestion or disagreement as a challenge to his/her authority .However colleagues can also bully each other and occasionally a staff may bully the Principal.*

***Most common manifestations of Adult Bullying are:***

*Isolation*

*Non recognition of work*

*Abusive communication.*

*A teacher may unwittingly or otherwise reinforce bullying behaviour in a number of ways:*

*1. Using sarcasm when addressing a pupil.*

*2. Making negative comments about a pupil's appearance or background.*

*3. Humiliating a pupil who is academically weak or vulnerable in other ways.*

*4. Using any gesture or expression of a threatening nature.*

***Profile of pupil who bullies.***

*It is generally accepted that bullying is **a learned behaviour.***

*The pupil may be modelling the behaviour of parents and siblings.*

*Pupils who bully tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self discipline.*

*They may feel inadequate, have low self esteem and lack confidence.*

*They tend to be leaders----may not get involved directly in the bullying themselves but encourage others to bully.*

*They can lack any sense of remorse and lack the ability to empathise. They may be unaware or indifferent to the victim's feelings.*

*They may be very spoilt and go totally unchallenged at home.*

*Pupils who bully can also be attention seeking; they set out to impress bystanders and enjoy the reaction their behaviour provokes.*

*Some children become involved in bullying by acting as bystanders or supporters of the bully. If this is the case it must be pointed out that they are equally guilty of bullying.*

### **Profile of the victim**

*A pupil who is anyway different—too fat, too clever, too refined, from a different country etc.*

*A pupil who is too timid and reacts in a vulnerable and distressed way.*

*A pupil who has particular mannerisms. Some pupils have a provocative manner which can attract bullying behaviour.*

*Some victims can have a persecution complex. They crave attention- be it positive or negative.*

*That said, **Bullying is never the victim's fault.***

### **Indications of Bullying/ Behaviour**

*Anxiety about travelling to/from school.*

*Unwillingness to go to school.*  
*Deterioration in educational performance*  
*Pattern of physical illness*  
*Unexplained changes in either mood/behaviour*  
*Visible signs of anxiety/distress*  
*Possessions missing*  
*Increased requests for money*  
*Unexplained bruising*  
*Evidence of assault*  
*Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her*

### ***School Policy on bullying.***

*\*To acknowledge the right of each individual to enjoy her time in school free from intimidation.*

*\*To acknowledge that incidents of bullying do occur.*

*\*To enable pupils, parents, and staff to clearly understand what constitutes bullying.*

*\*To assure pupils and parents that bullying is not tolerated in our school ;that it is taken seriously and will be dealt with severely.*

*\*To encourage pupils to support each other by reporting incidents of bullying to the staff in the knowledge that such reports will be acted on promptly.*

*\*To acknowledge that at it's most fundamental level bullying is a safety issue.*

*\*To acknowledge that bullying needs certain conditions to thrive:*

*Secrecy*

*Denial*

*Silent Onlookers*

*Silent Victims*

*Fear*

*Shame*

*Ignorance.*

***Starve the bully and it will die.***

*\*To establish clear procedures for the prevention of bullying and for dealing with incidents should they occur .*

***Strategies /Programmes to prevent bullying.***

*Implementation of Curriculum modules which raise awareness of topic from:*

*Alive O.*

*S.P.H.E.*

*R.S.E*

*Walk tall*

*Stay Safe*

***Use of Circle time, Co-operative games ect :***

*to develop a class and school spirit and enhance self-esteem  
to inform children in relation to issues of equality, racism and  
interculturalism*

*to promote the understanding and celebration of cultural  
diversity in Ireland.*

*Friendship week*—focus on positive relationships, bullying and evidence of hostility re. international pupils ,travellers etc .The whole school community made aware of events and programmes being used.

Parents made aware of school policy on bullying at parent/teacher meetings at the beginning of school year, during friendship week and also through leaflets on subject.

*Adequate supervision* of pupils is seen as a priority especially in the school yard, as this is where bullying most frequently occurs.

Pupils games monitored carefully.

Pupils are given *opportunities to assume responsibility and achieve success*. This in turn enhances their attitude to school life.

The focus of our school policy is *to encourage and support a change in behaviour with an emphasis on the positive*.

Through *our Pastoral care programme* school is seen as a place where people care and support each other.

### *Procedures for dealing with an incident of bullying.*

*Each teacher will deal with any incident of bullying that arises within her class .Such incidents are best investigated outside the class-room situation to avoid public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in the bullying behaviour.The teacher speaks privately and separately with those involved. If versions are*

*totally at loggerheads she checks for witness accounts. Written accounts may be useful and at times necessary. When analysing incidents of bullying the teacher seeks answers to questions of what, where, when, who, how and why. This is done in a calm manner. If a gang is involved, each member is interviewed individually and then the gang meets as a group. As this process is very time consuming the teacher may request the Principal to conduct the investigation.*

*Quite often bullying occurs without the teacher's knowledge. Hopefully however, pupils will feel confident about approaching their teacher if they are being bullied. Having discussed the problem and having helped the child understand the advantages of tackling **the problem and the bully**, the teacher will speak to the alleged bully. If the victim wishes to remain anonymous due to fear of further reprisals from the bully, the teacher will not reveal her name ; however the bully must be **confronted** and made aware that their behaviour is being **monitored** and will not be **tolerated**.*

***It is very important that the victim is reassured that the situation isn't going to spiral out of control.***

***If it is concluded that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour the following steps are taken.***

*1.If it is the first occurrence the bully is given a verbal warning and apologises to victim. A record of the incident is kept by the teacher ;however if the teacher deems it necessary, the parents of both victim and bully will be made aware of the incident through the home-work journal.*

*2.If the bullying takes place in the yard , the teacher on duty records incident in the yard behaviour book. If the bullying*

*behaviour continues, the pupil will be suspended from the yard for up to one week and will have to stand outside the Principal's office in silence .Suspension from the yard may be extended if necessary.*

*3.If the bullying behaviour continues the bully will be put on report for a certain period of time during which time her behaviour will be monitored. The report will be signed each day by the class teacher and the pupil's parents.*

*4. A meeting with the parents of the bully, class teacher, the pupil and Principal may be appropriate at this stage .Ways of dealing with the situation will be discussed and the parents will be asked to support or reinforce the actions taken by the school. The school is very aware that pupils involved in bullying and their victims , need help on an on-going basis. As the school has the services of a counsellor , both victim and bully will be given the opportunity to talk to him with the aim of enhancing their self esteem, social skills and coping strategies . The bully will be helped to see the situation from the victim's point of view .If this intervention is deemed inadequate , outside agencies that can offer help will be contacted.*

*5. If there is no improvement the problem will be reported to the B.O.M.*

*6.Suspension from school for a number of days may be enforced. The parents of a pupil who has been suspended will be expected, with the support of the school, to seek whatever help is deemed appropriate.*

*7. In very serious incidents where the school fears for the safety of a pupil the Gardai will be informed.*

*8.If the above procedures fail to overcome problem, the parents of the bully may be asked to find an alternative school placement for their child.*

**Throughout the process the victim is assured of ongoing support and encouraged to report any further incidents.**

### **Bullying and the role of parents.**

*The role of parents is vital in ensuring that our school policy on bullying is a success. Parents being the primary educators of their children have the most important role in the transmission of values, and the school, no matter how good, cannot take their place in this area. Bullying requires cooperation between the school and parents in seeking solutions .Positive input from parents is essential and crucial.*

*Parents who are concerned about their child in relation to bullying should contact the school re. their concerns . A meeting will be arranged as soon as possible to discuss the situation.*

### **Bullying and the wider community.**

*Through investigating incidents of bullying, we have discovered that quite often such incidents are part of a larger conflict----- involving adults and children outside of school. Such cases can present a problem for us because even though the incident had nothing to do with school ,we often have to deal with the fall-out. We cannot hope to resolve such conflicts, but we will do our best to protect the children while in our care.*

*As a lot of bullying occurs on the journey to and from school, it is very important that any adults who come into contact with our pupils eg. the school traffic warden, local shopkeepers etc. understand what constitutes bullying and that they report any such incident.*

**Bullying needs the support of the whole community if our policy is to be successful.**

**Our Anti- Bullying Code.**

*I should never bully others or allow others to bully me.*

*1.Treat other children kindly. Never kick, push ,pinch or spit.  
Use your brain not your fist.*

*2.Don't tease or jeer another child, or call them a name that  
might hurt their feelings.*

*3.Be friendly! Never threaten another child or say bad things  
about them to others.*

*4.Remember that everyone has a right to their own things.  
Never take someone else's belongings.*

*5.Use your own brain all the time.  
Never copy bad behaviour or join a bad gang.*

*6Never keep bullying a secret. Be brave! Always tell a parent  
or teacher. Remember that St. Eithne's is a telling school and  
a bully-free zone.*

*The above code is displayed in all classrooms where the teacher  
will refer to it if an incident of bullying arises.*

*This policy was ratified by the Board of Management April  
2001. It was reviewed and revised March 2006 .*

