

Anti-bullying

Definition of Bullying

Bullying takes place when an individual or a group repeatedly exercises control over another against their will, often leaving the target feeling powerless and alone. One-off incidents, whilst serious and always dealt with, do not fall within the definition of bullying.

To constitute bullying, an incident must involve one or more of the following elements:

An imbalance of power – the exercising of verbal, physical or psychological by the bully towards the victim

Intention – the conscious desire of one student or group of students to harm, threaten, or frighten another.

Repetition – the aggressive action is repeated over time and generates a fear in the victim of being the target of future attacks.

Bullying can adopt different forms and can be targeted at students for many reasons, such as:

Racial,

Religious,

Cultural,

Sexist,

Homophobic,

Gender-identity related,

Special educational needs,

Disability,

Home circumstances.

Bullying may involve one or more of the following behaviours:

Physical – e.g. hitting, kicking, taking belongings

Verbal – e.g. name-calling, insulting, racist remarks, threats

Psychological, emotional and social – e.g. spreading hurtful stories, images or opinions about someone, intimidating someone, excluding someone from social groups.

Bullying can also take place online (cyber-bullying). It is the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature on social media, through text messages or emails or by sharing photographs or videos.

Bullying can be carried out by an individual or by a group.

Bullying via social exclusion can be actively experienced (eg. not letting someone join in) or passively experienced (eg. ignoring) or as a combination of both.

Anti-bullying

Teachers will develop rules with students so they set their own climate of respect and responsibility. They will also teach pupils that they can and should stand up for others, and how to do this in a safe way.

All school staff will be trained to prevent the situations of bullying which will include:

- the use of positive terms, like what to do rather than what not to do.
- be a role model and follow the school rules
- reinforce the rules
- consistently apply consequences for not following the rules
- show students respect and encourage them to be successful
- make expectations clear - keep requests simple, direct, and specific
- reward good behaviour - try to affirm good behaviour four to five times for every one criticism of bad behaviour
- use one-on-one feedback
- help students correct their behaviours - help them understand breaking the rules results in consequences: "I know you can stop (negative action) and go back to (positive action). If you choose to continue, then (consequence)."

Classroom meetings will take place to provide a forum for students to talk about school-related issues beyond academics. These meetings will help teachers stay informed about what is going on at school and help students feel safe and supported. Classroom meetings will be short and held on a regular schedule. Students should feel free to discuss issues without fear. Meetings might identify and address problems affecting the group as a whole.

When necessary the follow-up procedure will take place. The teachers will be trained to be able to monitor student body language and reactions. If a topic of a classroom meeting seems to be affecting a student the teacher will follow-up with him or her.

Procedures to be followed when dealing with bullying incidents

a.) Stage 1 – Initial assessment of the situation

If an incident perceived as bullying has been identified or reported, an initial assessment will be carried out by the person(s) responsible at Level 1.

All incidents must be dealt with in accordance with the school's Discipline Policy. The initial assessment will be carried out after the School's Discipline Policy has been applied.

The aim of this assessment will be to determine whether the situation being monitored is a one-off incident or repeated behavior of a bullying nature.

This assessment will include observation in different areas of school and at different times throughout the school day. Staff will be informed that an assessment is being carried out and will be asked to monitor the students involved during their lessons or break-time duties. It will be clearly mentioned who staff must report their observations to.

This assessment could also include interviewing the students involved separately or interviewing any member of the school community who has witnessed the incident.

The person responsible at Level 1 will inform the Head of Sector of the result of the assessment. The outcome of the assessment will indicate that bullying was not identified and therefore the situation should be dealt with through the school's Discipline Policy, or there is a need to proceed to Stage 2 of the Anti-Bullying procedures.

The Head of Sector will keep a record of the assessment.

b.) Stage 2 – Bullying identified

Stage 2 begins when bullying has been confirmed through the initial assessment in Stage 1 or when there is repetition of an incident involving the same students that was previously dealt with as a one-off situation.

The first objective of this stage is to stop the behavior and to prevent any other incidents from occurring.

The person responsible at Level 2 will inform all members of teaching staff and convene meetings with the parents of the students involved.

Information will be given about the situation that has been identified and the steps that will be followed.

INTERVENTION

With the target

The student will be asked to identify a member of staff with whom s/he feels comfortable. This member of staff will offer support to the target of bullying by having daily conversations with the student and being the first point of reference for the student.

A support group will be created with students identified by the target of bullying. This group of peers will support the target, accompany him/her throughout the school day and report any incidents to their tutor.

The target of bullying will be offered support and guidance by the members of staff responsible at Level 2 on self-esteem, self-confidence and assertiveness.

The need to involve external support agents will be considered and parents will be informed.

With the bully (either individual or group)

Disciplinary measures will be applied to impress on the perpetrators that their behavior is unacceptable, deter them from repeating that behavior and signal to other pupils that the behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated by school.

Depending on the severity of the bullying, sanctions may include a verbal warning, a written or verbal apology, return of property, replacement of damaged possessions, detentions (after-school or during break times), behavior contract, behavior-monitoring report, internal suspension or exclusion. In all cases, the school's Discipline and Exclusion Policy will be applied.

The Level 2 members of staff will assess the nature of the bullying and implement the disciplinary measures that best apply to the situation.

Guidance will be offered to the perpetrators to help them change their behavior. Empathy with the target will always be encouraged.

The need to involve external support agents will be considered and parents will be informed.

With the by-standers (class or year group)

A plan will be created by the Level 2 members of staff who will liaise with class tutors. The aims of this plan will be to reinforce the rationale and objectives of the school's anti-bullying policy, stress the group's responsibility to ensure that the target of bullying is not isolated and to intervene when someone is being bullied, making it clear to the bully that their actions are disapproved of.

This plan will be implemented during tutor periods, especially-convened assemblies or PSHE lessons.

FOLLOW UP TO ACTIONS

The Level 2 members of staff will check that there is no repetition of the bullying each week for 4 weeks. This will be done by observation of the students involved in different areas of the school at different times and by having informal conversations with the students involved and with by-standers.

If there is no repetition of the bullying, the situation will still be monitored each half term for two terms. If there is no repetition after two terms, procedures will conclude.

In the case of any repetition, the members of staff responsible at Level 2 will immediately refer the matter to the Head of Primary or the Senior Teacher i/c Pastoral Care who will then decide whether there is a need to proceed to the next stage

c.) Stage 3 – Bullying Persists or Very Serious Incidents

Serious (possibly involving behavior of a physical or violent nature) or persistent cases of bullying will be dealt with following the school's Discipline and Exclusion Policy.

The school recognizes that some forms of aggravated bullying may have to be reported to outside agencies or local authorities