

Policy - Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools

Bullying behaviours are those behaviours which are repeated over time by an individual or a group and which is intentionally hurtful (Sharp and Smith, 1994; Rigby, 1996) in a direct or indirect manner (Rivers and Smith, 1994; Sanders and Phye, 2004; Pepler and Craig, 2008) against a person who has difficulty defending himself or herself (Olweus, 2011).

Violence, harassment and bullying are human rights issues that profoundly affect the lives of children (United Nations 1989). The role of the school is to provide an appropriate education for all its students, therefore a stable and safe learning environment is imperative in order to achieve this goal as stated in the Respect for all Framework (MEDE 2014). Bullying behaviour undermines the value of respect and the quality of education.

Objectives:

- To provide a safe and secure environment for all.
- To prevent and stop bullying behaviour.
- To promote the value of respect towards each other.

Background:

- Prevention and early intervention programme.
- Instil a sense of belonging and inclusion.
- Encourage parents to take a more active role.
- Support the educational achievement of all students.
- Promote a stable and safe school environment.

Strategy:

- Whole-School Approach
- Parental Involvement
- Student Involvement
- Overall Responsibility

Reporting:

- All members of staff working within the educational establishments, who witness a bullying incident, are to verbally intervene immediately to stop the bullying behaviour.
- When a bullying incident is reported, the member of staff needs to listen in a non-judgemental manner.
- All bullying behaviour is to be reported to Ms. Abela (Asst. Head i/c of pastoral care), and noted in the Incident Report Book.
- Ms. Abela is immediately to inform Ms. Saliba (Head of School).
- Once Ms. Saliba is informed, Ms. Abela is to inform the parents of both parties by means of a letter.

PROCEDURES

Student-to-Student Bullying

1. Listen to reporting student carefully.
2. Speak to the perpetrator (separately from reporting student).
3. Speak to witnesses for further clarification.

4. Inform Ms. Abela about incident.
5. Discuss with Ms. Abela who is going to address the issue.
6. In cases where Ms. Abela together with Ms. Saliba feel that specialised intervention is required, refer case to guidance teacher.
7. Guidance teacher investigates and clarifies whether it is conflict or bullying, and proceeds accordingly.
8. If the case is still unresolved, the guidance teacher is expected to report back to Ms. Abela who refers case to the Anti-Bullying Service.

If the parents are making the referral about the bullying incident, it must immediately be reported to the Head of School or designated member of staff, and then follow guidelines mentioned.

Cyber Bullying

1. Inform SMT, who in turn informs parents of the students involved.
2. SMT to keep record of the meetings with the parents and decisions taken (if any).
3. SMT to advise parents to file a police report (this needs to be included in the incident report log book).
4. Should SMT still have concerns about the student/s' safety they are to inform APPOGG.

Adult to Student Bullying

1. Any form of adult to student bullying is considered as child abuse.
2. Head of School needs to be informed immediately.

3. Head of School is obliged to inform Director of Student Services, in writing and copy College Principal.
4. The Director of Student Services will set up a board to investigate the case.
5. Outcome will be forwarded to the Director General of the Directorate for Educational Services.
6. If allegations are unfounded, the Director General will dispose of all collected data.
7. If allegations are sustained, DG is to proceed according to the established regulations and legislations.

Student to Adult Bullying

- To be dealt with at SMT level.
- Further advice is to be sought from College Principal, who in turn refers to the Director of the Student Services Department.

Adult to Adult Bullying

Reference needs to be made to the regulations and legislation in force at that time.