

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Rationale

Bullying takes place in any college.

Total elimination of bullying will be a difficult if not impossible task. It is however the duty of all staff and all students to pursue this ideal with determination and vigour. Students are entitled to enjoy their educational experiences without fear of harassment from any sector of the college population. It is necessary that we operate an active whole college anti bullying policy which is applied consistently and promptly.

Definition

Bullying is the aggressive, deliberate and premeditated intent by an individual student or a group of students to inflict physical, verbal or mental suffering on another student or group of students. Any behaviour which is the improper use of power in order to intimidate, threaten, distress or hurt others, is bullying behaviour.

Principles: Student Rights:

Students have the right:

- to be able to tell the teacher about any bullying but expect that the teachers will consult with them about any decision to be made about the bullying
- to be protected against the bully
- to feel happy and secure
- to go around the college and not be frightened of anything or person
- to expect politeness from others
- to be respected no matter what their colour of skin, nationality or religion
- to be treated the same whether they are fat or thin
- not be picked on or ignored by teachers.

Awareness:

Forums to raise the issue of bullying include:

- Staff Meetings - discussion of the policy and procedures
- Information for parents - parental booklet and newsletters
- Staff Manual - include a copy of the policy
- Induction procedures for new staff

Supervision:

Staff on boarding duty are to be particularly alert to both incident and atmosphere which may suggest that bullying is an issue in the boarding houses.

Guidelines for Reporting Incidents:

- a) If teacher able to deal with the incident, do so and report to Vice Principal.
- b) If staff unable to deal with the incident, immediate referral to Principal or Vice Principal.

Talking to a Victim of Bullying:

Stages in the Process

1. Denial

- Be prepared for guilt, shame, anger, fear, etc.
- Go slow, don't insist on information.
- Demonstrate confidence, concern, belief, empathy.
- Start with general conversation.
- Keep to the third person - who are others afraid of?

2. Partial Disclosures

- Be prepared for hints, red herrings.
- Give assurance that it is an important matter and not considered as tale telling.
- Find out information in other ways than by direct questioning.
- Give assurance that bullying is common, that something can and will be done, and that emotional responses are normal.

3. Disclosure and Acceptance of the Problem

- Show belief - some bullying is shocking.
- Show you have understood.
- Try to be empathic rather than emotive.

4. Problem Solving

- Help the student to formulate his or her own views.
- Offer positive, realistic, resourceful suggestions.
- Confirm that your support will continue.
- Help the student plan a response.
- End each meeting optimistically and with praise.

Talking to a Bully:

1. Explain the problem clearly and frankly. Ask for their version of events - be prepared for evasion, deflecting blame, discrepancies in events, etc. Test each statement made by the bully.
2. The bully should explicitly identify the bullying behaviour and attempt to explain why this has happened.

3. The bully should identify ways in which this might be changed. (Brainstorm workable ideas and solutions.) Note these ideas and have them agreed upon.
4. Explain that their behaviour will be closely monitored in the light of the agreement you have come to. Agree a date when the problem will be reviewed.

The method is primarily one of change of behaviour through support and counselling, though the formality of the meeting and review should be maintained to emphasise the seriousness of the situation. Stress the behaviour and its effects but not the people involved. Stress that it is in their power to change and it is their responsibility to change.

General Points:

1. Each case of bullying to be investigated and records kept on file.
2. Staff to be informed of all incidents and requested to keep a watch on the situation.
3. Bullies must be made to realise the effect their actions have on the victim.
4. Each student in a 'bullying group' is responsible including bystanders who did nothing.
5. If assault, police may be involved.
6. Discuss and review action to be taken with victim and bully. Arrange a review date.
7. Review meeting to be formal - praise all positive changes and/or outcomes.
8. Keep recorded bullies under surveillance.