

## **POLICY PROHIBITING HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING**

The School prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, bullying, disruptive or violent behaviors, a conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and school's ability to educate its students in a safe and disciplined environment is absolutely forbidden. Students learn by example, therefore school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation or bullying.

"Harassment, intimidation or bullying" means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication (a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager), whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents which are:

1. Reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or
2. By any other distinguishing characteristic; and that
3. Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; and that
4. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property; or
5. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
6. Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

Bullying is most commonly witnessed amongst students, though not overtly it can be:

Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
Physical	Pushing, kicking, biting, hitting, punching or any use of violence
Racial	Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
Sexual	Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
Direct or indirect Verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber Bullying	· All areas of internet ,such as email and internet chat Twitter, Facebook misuse· Mobile threats by text messaging and calls· Misuse of associated technology , i.e. camera and video facilities, Ipad, games consoles,

Bullying may be related to:

- Race
- Gender
- Religion
- Culture
- SEN or disability
- Appearance or health condition
- Home circumstances
- Sexual orientation, sexism, or sexual bullying, homophobia

Bullying can take place in the classroom, playground, toilets, on the journey to and from school, on residential trips and cyberspace. It can take place in group activities and between families in the local community.

## **PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS**

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of one person or persons over another.

This can be achieved by:

- The size of the individual,
- The strength of the individual
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity – through the use of cyber bullying or using email, social networking sites, texts etc

## **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO RESPOND TO BULLYING?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Bullying has the potential to damage the mental health of a victim. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

## **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS FOR PARENTS AND STAFF**

A child may indicate through his/her behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- begs to be driven to school
- changes his/her usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries himself/herself to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning

- begins to put in less effort with school work than previously
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber-message is received
- lack of eye contact
- becoming short tempered
- change in attitude to people at home.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated thoroughly.

#### SCHOOL POLICY ON PROHIBITION OF HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING:

The ethos of our School fosters high expectations of outstanding behavior. It is expected that students will conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities, with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities and the care of school facilities and equipment.

- Students and staff are expected to behave in a way that creates a conducive learning environment. The best discipline is self-imposed, and it is the responsibility of staff to use instances of violations of the school's policies and rules and regulations as opportunities for helping students learn to assume and accept responsibility for their behavior and the consequences of their behavior.
- Staff to follow the equality policy; supporting every child in the school. Staff must be careful not to highlight differences of children or an individual child, even if this is done in jest. This gives other children advocacy to use this difference to begin calling names or teasing.
- Staff must be vigilant regarding groups of friends together. Friendship groups may bring about the imbalance of power and must be led towards welcoming others to join them and not excluding others from their group.
- Staff must reinforce a general message that children do not have to be friends with everyone else, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings and be kind to each other.
- It is expected that all students and staff will act in accordance with the behavioral expectations set forth in the Code of conduct for Staff & Students.

- The School expects that all students and staff will refrain from becoming involved in any bullying, harassing, intimidating or threatening behaviors.
- “Zero tolerance” has become a school and workplace necessity and each student is being taught, and each staff member is expected to demonstrate an understanding, that any of these actions (verbal or written) bring serious consequences, no matter how inconsequential the student or staff member may believe his/her intentions to be.
- When an incident of bullying has taken place, staff must record & report each incident to Principal / Vice Principal / Headmistress.
- Further prohibited by this policy is reprisal, retaliation or false accusation against a victim, witness, one with reliable information or any other person who has reliable information about an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying or who reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying.
- The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the appropriate school administrator after consideration of the nature, severity and circumstances of the act in accordance with this policy and the school handbooks.