



METHODIST COLLEGE BELFAST PREPARATORY DEPARTMENT

ADDRESSING-BULLYING POLICY

Every pupil at this school is entitled to be protected from bullying behaviour of any description. This school is completely opposed to this behaviour in any form. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of our school community have a right to work and learn in a safe and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such a learning environment.

The staff of Methodist Preparatory Department believe that the whole school community should be made aware of the school's Anti Bullying Policy. This policy is not merely a list of regulations and sanctions, it is also a statement of the school's values and beliefs.

Bullying behaviour occurs in all schools but it is completely against the ethos of Methodist College Prep Department and it is not tolerated. For any organisation to achieve its aims there have to be accepted standards of behaviour and rules. For this to be maintained discipline is key and the Prep Department promotes positive behaviour. Good discipline practices create conditions for effective learning in a positive learning environment where pupils develop responsible attitudes and values. Our discipline policy is a positive policy of encouraging good behaviour and attitudes.

Maintaining good behaviour is essential in every school and all our pupils are expected to behave in a responsible manner; to themselves, to others and to the environment. To achieve this goal we believe parents must work in partnership with all staff and support the expectations of behaviour for every pupil. We must expect the same standards of behaviour from all children and must therefore ask for the support and co-operation of parents in implementing this policy. This is a policy for staff, pupils and parents.

What is bullying behaviour?

Bullying behaviour is unacceptable, unkind or hurtful behaviour, which is recurrent or persistent over a period of time and is aimed at an individual or a group of pupils. This could be repeated behaviour that intentionally causes distress to others or makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened.

It may be:

- **Physical** - e.g. hitting, kicking, taking or hiding things
- **Verbal** - e.g. name calling, teasing, insulting

- **Social Exclusion** - e.g. excluding someone from a group
- **Emotional** - e.g. giving 'looks', being unfriendly, causing someone to lose self-esteem
- **Cyber bullying** - e.g. use of social media to name call/threaten.

These examples are unacceptable behaviour BUT only constitute bullying behaviour when they are recurrent / persistent, targeted with intent and where a power imbalance between pupils is evident.
Not all unkind or unacceptable behaviour is bullying behaviour.

Pupils may be targeted on the basis of their:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| ● personal appearance | ● race |
| ● religion | ● disability / ability |
| ● sexuality | ● cultural |
| ● gender | ● other? |

THE SCHOOL WILL ENDEAVOUR TO:

(according to the age of the children and, when appropriate)

- Create an open atmosphere and be proactive in minimising the risks
- Establish procedures to create a safe and secure environment for all
- Treat bullying behaviour as a serious matter which can have a serious impact on the pupil who is being bullied
- Encourage the pupils experiencing bullying behaviour (or their friends or parents/guardians or those who witness this type of behaviour) to speak to an adult in school and to be confident that appropriate action will be taken
- Treat the pupil who has been bullied in a supportive manner
- Take swift and appropriate actions
- Involve parents/guardians as early as possible, if deemed appropriate
- Alert staff to the dangers of bullying behaviour and the need for vigilance
- Include other agencies as required
- Highlight bullying behaviour and ways of combating it in the curriculum of each year group
- Conduct a survey in each class and discuss ways to help.

ACTION TO REDUCE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR:

- Ensure through the Positive Behaviour Policy that pupils, staff and parents are aware of their responsibilities
- Communicate the Anti-Bullying Policy to all members of the school community
- Agreed procedures for responding to incidents - staff report to Pastoral Care Co-ordinator who will inform Deputy Head and Head if required
- Procedures for logging incidents - Pastoral Care Book and Pastoral Care Records
- Use of staff meetings and Pastoral Care Book to make staff aware of incidents and concerns
- Staff follow agreed procedure when dealing with a pupil believed to be bullying
- Swift and considered action
- Talk to parents of the pupil being bullied and or the pupil displaying bullying behaviour if deemed appropriate

- Encourage pupils to tell and report any case of bullying behaviour
- Encourage positive attitudes to Anti-Bullying within the school e.g. assemblies and class discussions
- Encourage positive relationships; teacher - pupil, pupil - pupil and school - parents
- Aim to persuade a pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour to feel or show some concern for the pupil being bullied and to change his or her behaviour
- Use of Yearly Transition forms by teachers to inform staff about pupils in their class
- Adequate supervision in playgrounds
- Opportunities for developing positive peer relationships - e.g. prefect system
- Class Council and School Council can be used to raise issues
- Use of PDMU materials and Circle Time if appropriate
- The Head of Department and SMT to monitor behaviour in school.

RESPONSIBILITIES

THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT will:

- Establishes the ethos of the school and sets the climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely
- Responsible for implementing the anti-bullying strategy
- Ensures all staff are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying behaviour
- Ensures that the pupils know that bullying behaviour is wrong and is unacceptable in school
- Ensures that staff have sufficient training to be equipped to deal with incidents of bullying behaviour
- Can report to governors on the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy on request.

STAFF will:

- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils
- Foster in our pupils self-esteem, a sense of their rights and their responsibilities to others
- Emphasise the importance of telling a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed
- Discuss bullying behaviour and the impact it can have on the pupil being bullied and the pupil displaying bullying behaviour
- Acknowledge appropriate behaviour
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying behaviour
- Take all reports of this type of behaviour seriously and act promptly - listen and respond
- Follow up any complaint by a parent and report back on the action taken
- Record all incidents and pass on to Pastoral Care Co-ordinator
- Inform the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator of all incidents
- Communicate with all concerned, in line with procedures
- Attend meetings with pupils or parents if deemed appropriate

- Monitor the situation following immediate actions and talk to the pupils concerned after action has been taken
- The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator together with the teacher will investigate the incident, speaking to pupils concerned
- The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator or teacher will inform parents (of the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour and or the pupil displaying bullying behaviour) if deemed appropriate
- The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator or teacher will discuss action to be taken and sanctions with the Deputy Head and or Head of Department.

PUPILS

We expect our pupils to:

- Refrain from bullying behaviour
- Intervene in bullying behaviour unless it is unsafe for them to do so
- Report all incidents of bullying behaviour and speak out
- Respect and support peers
- Adhere to the School's Positive Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

PARENTS

We ask our Parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children which might be evidence of something going on
- Encouraging their child to report any incidents of bullying behaviour
- Explaining the implications of allowing this type of behaviour to continue unchecked
- Telling children not to retaliate to any forms of bullying behaviour
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children
- Keeping a written record of any incidents of bullying behaviour
- Informing the school of any suspected incidents, even if their child is not involved
- Co-operating with the school, if their child is involved in bullying behaviour, to resolve the difficulty in a way which stops it from recurring
- Supporting the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS

- Class teachers will attempt to deal with incidents of unacceptable behaviour
- Teachers will assess if it is bullying behaviour using the school definition
- Teachers will pass concerns of any bullying behaviour onto the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator
- Teachers will record noteworthy events in writing for the Pastoral Care Records
- Any written notes made by teachers on incidents will be given to the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and placed in Pastoral Care Record book
- Teachers and Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will gather as much reliable information as possible to be clear as to whether the incident represents bullying behaviour
- Teachers will support the child who is being bullied
- Bullying behaviour incidents will be recorded in the Pastoral Care book for other staff to be made aware of

- The situation is monitored by the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and class teacher
- Teachers and the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator may meet with parents to discuss incidents
- Staff assess appropriate interventions and plan with reference to the Positive Behaviour Policy and NIABF guidance document, 'Responding to Alleged Bullying Behaviour'
- Further steps will be taken to support and respond to the needs of the pupils; they are the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour and the pupil displaying bullying behaviour as and when appropriate
- The Deputy Head and Head of Department are informed of all cases of bullying behaviour
- If the behaviour continues, the case will be referred to the Head of Department, who will contact the parents to arrange a formal interview
- The Head of Department may need to discuss the necessity of involving outside agencies, such as Education Welfare Officer, Behaviour Support Team or Educational Psychologist
- In the event of sustained bad/bullying behaviour the Head of Department of the College and the Board of Governors will be informed
- Even with a positive behaviour approach there are times when sanctions will be necessary. The sanctions outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy will be referred to
- The teacher and Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will continue to monitor the situation.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING

Behaviour on a whole school and individual basis will be monitored by the following means:

- Class teachers record incidents of bullying behaviour for the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator
- Bullying behaviour is recorded by the Pastoral Care co-ordinator
- Individual Education Plans
- Reports - written and oral
- The Head of Department and Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will monitor implementation of this policy
- The Head of Department monitors this policy on a day-to-day basis.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will attend any relevant training days and inform staff of any changes.

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

Pupil welfare embraces all aspects of pastoral care, including anti-bullying. The welfare of all our pupils is addressed through our other school policies.

- Child Protection
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- SEN Policy
- Acceptable Use of the Internet
- E - Safety Policy

- Mobile Phone Policy

ADVICE TO FAMILIES

- Do not confront each other
- Be aware of danger signs - not wanting to come to school, bed wetting etc.
- Talk calmly to your child if he/she is the bully
- Work out the underlying cause
- Help the child to change their behaviour

SUGGESTION FOR PARENTS

The aim should be that each child eventually acquires a high standard of self-discipline

- Do not encourage your child to look for **one best friend**. It is very difficult if they fall out or if one child leaves the school. It is better for the development of healthy social relationships that you encourage your child to have a wide variety of friends in different social situations. If one group has a disagreement it is not the end of the world!
- Provide opportunities for your children to continue their friendship with various classmates outside school
- Encourage friendly behaviour e.g. sharing their toys, ideas for games, playing by the rules, taking turns to decide what to do next etc.
- Try to encourage some friendships with children of similar interests/personalities
- Try to ensure that your children do not dominate other children
- Try to ensure that your children learn to stand up for themselves and think about the consequences of their actions
- Try to ensure that your children do not tease or hurt other children in any situation
- Try to teach your children what an acceptable and considerate standard of behaviour is
- Accept that all children misbehave to a greater or lesser degree and can get caught up in situations without thinking
- Do not take it personally if your child is involved in an incident
- Do not automatically believe your child to be **completely** innocent
- Accept that the school has often to implement one punishment for all involved because conflicting stories make it difficult to discover the 'absolute truth'.
- Accept that if you disagree with the school's handling of a matter you should speak to the class teacher, the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator or the Head of Department. It is vitally important that you do not discuss your feelings on the matter in front of the child
- Accept that the school and parents should support each other so that the child receives a clear message about duty, discipline and standards of civilised behavior.

How Can You Tell If A Child Is Being Bullied?

Behavioural Symptoms

- ◆ Does not want to come to school
- ◆ Has damaged or lost clothing or possessions
- ◆ Asks for extra money
- ◆ Arriving late for school
- ◆ Avoiding friends at school
- ◆ Is doing poorly at their work
- ◆ Refusing to tell what's wrong

Physical Symptoms

- ◆ Sleeps badly or cries at night
- ◆ Stops eating
- ◆ Unexplained bruises
- ◆ Has mystery illness
- ◆ Feels sick frequently in class

Emotional Symptoms

- ◆ Becomes easily startled, irritable or aggressive
- ◆ Is quieter than usual, withdrawn or distressed
- ◆ Loss of confidence
- ◆ Bursts into tears

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