



# KILDARE PLACE SCHOOL

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bullying affects everyone, not just the victim and the bully. It affects those other children who watch and often less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up and it rarely sorts itself out. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating or threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are evident in our society. No one person or group, whether staff or pupil, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will a child be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at the school.

Kildare Place School believes that pupils have the right to learn in a caring, supportive and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. All institutions, large and small, contain a number of pupils with the potential for bullying behaviour. This school has a clear policy on the promotion of dignity and respect for others, where it is stressed that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour – it is wrong and will not be tolerated. It is important that we have a clear, written policy to promote this belief, where both parents and pupils are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

### WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is **repeated** aggression – verbal, psychological or physical – conducted by an individual or group against others.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, can scarcely be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying.

### TYPES OF BULLYING

Bullying can take a number of different forms:

- ❖ Physical Aggression  
Includes punching, kicking, tripping people up etc.
- ❖ Damage to property  
Clothing, school books, bags etc can be the focus of attention for the bully.
- ❖ Extortion  
Demands for money or lunchbox contents, often accompanied by threats, may be made.
- ❖ Intimidation  
Based on the use of very aggressive body language and vocal threats.
- ❖ Abusive Telephone Calls/Text Messages and internet websites.  
Usually anonymous and intimidating, it includes emails, text messages and video images.
- ❖ Isolation  
Deliberate exclusion by some or all of a class group. Maybe accompanied by passing around insulting notes or whispering aloud.
- ❖ Name Calling  
Persistent, hurtful, humiliating often refers to someone's physical appearance or accent.
- ❖ Slagging  
Personal remarks often about someone's appearance or other individual differences eg Religion, Sexual Orientation, Country of Origin etc.

## INDICATIONS OF BULLYING

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a child is being bullied:

- ✓ Anxiety about travelling to and from school
- ✓ Unwillingness or refusal to attend; mitching
- ✓ Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration or enthusiasm
- ✓ Pattern of physical illnesses (e.g headaches, stomach aches etc.)
- ✓ Unexplained changes of mood, particularly after weekends or holidays
- ✓ Visible signs of distress such as stammering, nightmares, crying, and bedwetting.
- ✓ Spontaneous, out-of-character comments about pupils or teachers
- ✓ Possessions missing or damaged
- ✓ Increased requests for money or stealing money
- ✓ Unexplained bruising, cuts or damaged clothing
- ✓ Non-involvement in group activities eg break time games.
- ✓ Reluctance or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. But if repeated or occurring in combination they do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

## CHARACTERISTICS IN BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Any member of the school community can be a victim of or perpetrator of bullying behaviour.

### The Victim

Any pupil, through no fault of their own may be bullied. It is common in the normal course of play for pupils to tease or taunt each other. However, at a certain point, taunting may become a form of bullying behaviour. As children are quick to notice differences in others, pupils who are perceived as different are those more prone to encounter such behaviour. However, the pupils who are most at risk of becoming victims are those who react in a vulnerable and distressed manner. The seriousness and duration of the bullying is directly related to the pupil's continuing response to the verbal, physical or psychological aggression. It is of note that some pupils can unwittingly behave in a very provocative manner which attracts bullying behaviour.

### The Bully

It is generally accepted that bullying is learned behaviour. Pupils who bully tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-discipline. They can lack any sense of remorse; often they convince themselves that the victim deserves the treatment meted out. Those pupils may also be attention-seeking; often they try to impress and enjoy the reaction their behaviour provokes. They tend to lack the ability to empathise and are unaware of, or indifferent to the victim's feelings. Some seem to enjoy inflicting pain. It is of note that many bullies suffer from a lack of confidence and have low self-esteem. It is not uncommon to find that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour are themselves also bullied. They tend to be easily provoked and frequently provoke others.

## POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The Kildare Place School ethos promotes a strong sense of community in a safe and caring environment where bullying of any kind is not tolerated. To underline this, we take the following steps:

- Organise the school community in order to minimise the opportunities for bullying eg provide increased supervision at problem times.
- Discuss, at regular intervals, aspects of bullying and the appropriate way to behave towards each other eg at Assembly and RSE programmes
- Deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary.
- Regularly review this school policy and its degree of success.
- Do not use teaching materials which give a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, sex etc.
- Staff are made aware of on-going teacher training programmes available which deal with raising awareness, developing techniques and other issues relating to bullying.
- Encourage pupils to discuss how they get along with others and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes a review of what friendship really means.
- Encourage pupils to tell their teacher or trusted adult without fear, if they suspect someone is being bullied. This can be done in an anonymous way e.g worry box.
- Detailed reports are kept of serious incidents by the Principal.
- Bullying is treated as a serious, anti-social offence. Disciplinary steps are taken as per the school's Code of Behaviour Policy.

If bullying is suspected or reported, we talk to the alleged victim, the alleged bully and any witnesses. If necessary written reports are kept by the class teacher and/or the Principal. If any degree of bullying is identified, help and support is given as appropriate to both the victim and the bully.

Pupils who have been bullied maybe supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their teacher or the Principal.
- Having a general class discussion or 'Circle Time' about the incident.
- Asking for a written account from all involved.
- Reassuring the bullied pupil that he/she did nothing wrong.
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence and offering continuing support when they need it.

While pupils who bully are disciplined they must be helped to change. (These methods may be used as deemed appropriate)

- Talking about what happened to discover why he/she became involved.
- Asking for a written account of the incident
- Informing and or meeting with his/her parents/guardians
- Continuing to work with him/her to eradicate any prejudiced attitudes.
- Taking one or more of the disciplinary steps in the Code of Behaviour.

## THE ROLE OF THE PARENTS

If any parent/guardian notice any unusual behaviour changes in their child, have concerns or indeed suspect their child may be a victim of bullying, they should first contact the class teacher and where appropriate the school Principal without delay. Parental concerns are taken seriously and appropriate action will follow. Parents are encouraged to discuss the school's Code of Behaviour and this anti-bullying policy with their children and to assure them that they should never be afraid to report bullying incidents or ask for help.