

St. Oliver's N.S. Duncannon

Anti Bullying Policy 2018

Introduction

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other children who watch, and 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 behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in 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 best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at St. Oliver's.

Why is an anti-bullying policy necessary?

The Board of Management and Staff of St. Oliver's believe that its pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied.

All schools, both large and small, contain some members of pupils with the potential for bullying behaviour. If a school is well-disciplined and organised, it can minimise the occurrence of bullying. St. Oliver's has a clear policy on the promotion of good citizenship, where it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is **WRONG and will not be tolerated**.

It is important, therefore, that St. Oliver's has a clear, written policy to promote this belief, where both pupils and parents/guardians are fully aware that bullying complaint will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

What is Bullying?

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. It can be

- (a) Physical;
A child can be physically punched, kicked, hit, tripped, pushed, spat at, etc
- (b) Verbal:
Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling, spreading rumours, making threats, etc. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/social disability, of personality etc.
- (c) Exclusion
A child can be bullied simply by being excluded from discussions/activities, with those they believe to be their friends.
- (d) Damage to Property or Theft:
Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen. Physical threats may be used by the bully in order that the pupil hands over property to them.

What can you do if you are being bullied?

Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon!

1. Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and it is **WRONG!**
2. Be proud of who you are. It is good to be an individual.
3. Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
4. Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
5. Be assertive – shout, “No”! Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of Staff.

6. Fighting back may make things worse. If you decide to fight back, talk to a teacher or parent/guardian first.
7. Generally, it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.

Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with the bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

If you know someone is being bullied:

- (A) Take Action! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel unhappy and on their own.
- (B) If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY.
Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.
- (C) Do not be, or don't pretend to be, friends with a bully.

As a Parent:

- (A) Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.
- (B) Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, how lunch time was spent etc.
- (C) If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school IMMEDIATELY. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- (D) It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.
- (E) Tell your own son or daughter there is nothing wrong with him or her. It is not his or her fault that he/she is being bullied.

- (F) Make sure that your child is fully aware of St. Oliver's policy concerning bullying and that he/she will not be afraid to ask for help.

As a School:

- (a) Organise the school community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying, eg provide increased supervision at problem times.
- (b) Use any opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying and the appropriate way to behave towards each other eg the R.S.E. programme.
- (c) Deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents, where necessary.
- (d) Review the School Policy and its degree of success.
- (e) The School Staff will continue to have a firm but fair discipline structure. The rules should be few, simple and easy to understand.
- (f) Not use teaching materials or equipment which gives a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, sex, etc.
- (g) Encourage pupils to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes a review of what friendship really is.
- (h) Encourage pupils to treat everyone with respect.
- (i) We will treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from St. Oliver's.

Important to Note

St. Oliver's condemns all forms of bullying and commits itself to dealing with all instances of bullying. The Board of Management and Staff strongly asserts the right of every member of the school community to work in a safe and non-threatening environment.

In accordance with our school policy on bullying, prevention of bullying is an integral part of our school's Code of Discipline /Rules. All reports of alleged

bullying, no matter how trivial, should be reported to teacher/s who will investigate and deal with them in a sensitive and caring way.

Structure for Dealing with cases of Bullying

The structure for dealing with cases of bullying is as follows

- Alleged bullying behaviour should be reported initially to the Class Teacher. He/she will investigate the report. His/her first actions will generally be on a no blame basis so the alleged perpetrator will be aware of how hurtful his/her behaviour is and that it must stop. It almost always does. The Class Teacher may consult with and or enlist the help of other Staff members.
- If no improvement occurs, the Class teacher will inform the Principal who will, in turn, speak to the children concerned.
- Should a problem still persist, the parents will be asked to meet with the Class Teacher and the Principal.
- Any further instances of bullying by the same guilty party/ies will be referred, by the Principal, to the Board of Management for final decision.

It is also our intention to deal with bullying in a pro-active manner, involving a whole school approach. Accordingly, the school will:

- Ensure that the teaching staff is kept fully informed of bullying cases and policies.
- Develop an awareness of bullying and its consequences through S.P.H.E. and Religion classes.