

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY DOCUMENT

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another party.

Bullying behaviour includes physical aggression; damage to or interference with, property; extortion; intimidation; abusive telephone calls; isolation; name-calling or "slagging".

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, although not condoned, can scarcely be defined as bullying which is systematic and/or ongoing.

AIMS OF POLICY

1. Every pupil at Blackrock College is entitled to an education free from fear and intimidation. Bullying is not tolerated at Blackrock College.
2. Raise awareness of bullying as an inappropriate, uncaring mode of behaviour
3. Ensure that fellow-pupils, teachers, parents/guardians, ancillary staff when aware of a bullying incident, feel comfortable in reporting such incidents
4. To put in place a programme of support for (i) those being bullied (ii) those involved in bullying behaviour
5. To evaluate the effectiveness of school policy on anti-bullying behaviour

OBJECTIVES

The aims will be achieved through:

1. the posting of our Anti-Bullying Statement in all rooms and corridors of the school
2. the holding of a Bullying Awareness Day twice a year, usually at the start of both the academic (September) and calendar (January) years
3. the appointment of a Post of Responsibility holder to prepare, oversee and review the Bullying Awareness Days
4. the re-enforcement of the School Policy by the Deans at Year Assemblies
5. the vigilance of the teaching and ancillary staff in identifying bullying incidents

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY DOCUMENT

OBJECTIVES (Continued)

6. by encouraging the House Representatives to report incidents of bullying and seeing this as responsible behaviour rather than telling tales
7. counsellors for each year who meet with boys individually, establish a relationship of trust, thus providing a confidential support service
8. the implementation of the S.P.H.E. programme
9. Communicating with the parents through the Association Committees and at group and individual meetings.

All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, should be noted, investigated and dealt with by the Dean. In this way, pupils will gain confidence in reporting such incidence of injustice. This confidence factor is of vital importance.

IN THE EVENT OF A BULLYING INCIDENT:

- (i) the first point of contact for parents/guardians should be the Dean.
- (ii) the relevant counsellor should be informed by the Dean of serious cases of bullying
- (iii) the procedure for dealing with serious disciplinary issues should be applied
- (iv) counselling for both the victim of bullying and the transgressor should be applied
- (v) meetings with parents/guardians should be arranged

It is our policy to develop in pupils a willingness to walk away from confrontation and find non-aggressive ways of dealing with problems. We discourage retaliation – it makes the situation worse rather than better.

Pupils should inform an adult of any difficulties so that appropriate action can be taken.

Signs And Symptoms Of Bullying

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

- anxiety about travelling to and from school - requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, mitching;
- deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches);
- visible signs of anxiety or distress - stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;

Signs And Symptoms Of Bullying

(Continued)

- unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
- spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- possessions missing or damaged;
- increased requests for money or stealing money;
- unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing;
- reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him.

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

Where/When does it happen?

- (a) on the way to and from school – bus, Dart, local shops
- (b) between classes – toilets, corridors, assembly areas, refectory, church
- (c) during class – sneering, isolation, interference with books
- (d) after school – changing rooms, showers
- (e) cyber bullying via social websites such as Bebo, Facebook, Myspace, etc.

CONCLUSION

A whole-school approach to Bullying whereby parents, staff and pupils are vigilant and aware, promotes an environment where all other pupils can be happy in the school community.

The school rules – Be Caring, Be There, Be Truthful – underscores this policy and promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility amongst all members of our community.

We strongly disapprove of vulgar, offensive, sectarian, racist or other abusive behaviour and we actively promote respect for the dignity of the individual, qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding, and an awareness of the interdependence of people in group and community.

Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, with the school management to act in preventing bullying behaviour by any member of the school community.

~~~~~