

Procedures for noting and reporting an incident of bullying behaviour

1. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, should be noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance.
2. Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils should be referred immediately to the Principal or Vice-Principal.
3. Parents or guardians of victims and bullies should be informed by the Principal or Vice-Principal earlier rather than later, of incidents, so that they are given the opportunity of discussing the matter. They are then in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs.
4. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
5. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, caretakers, cleaners, should be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the appropriate teaching member of staff.
6. In the case of complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally be raised in the first instance, with the staff member in question and if necessary with the Principal.
7. Where cases relating to either a pupil or teacher remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the School's Board of Management.
8. If not resolved at Board level, refer to local Inspectorate.

Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying:

1. Teachers are best advised to take a calm, unemotional problem solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour, reported either by pupils, staff or parents or guardians. Such incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation, to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour. In any incident of bullying, the teacher should speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
2. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, seek answers to questions of WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHO and WHY. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
3. If a gang is involved, each member should be interviewed individually and then the gang should be met as a group. Each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.
4. If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
5. Each member of the gang should be helped to handle possible pressures that often face them from the other members after interview by the teacher.
6. Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour should keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
7. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, meet with the parents or guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate. Explain the actions

being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy. Discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school.

8. Arrange follow-up meetings with the two parties involved separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.
