

# CASTLE SCHOOL

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### What is bullying?

Bullying is a deliberate, conscious, willful desire to demean, humiliate, intimidate and hurt others. Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour that is often repeated over a period of time. There is often an imbalance in the bully/victim relationship – the victim will have difficulty in defending him or herself. It can be carried out by an individual or a group and may be physical and/or emotional.

We define bullying as any behaviour which makes another person feel hurt, threatened or frightened. It can take the following forms:

- Physical abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Deliberate damage to another person's property or theft
- Forcing someone to do something against their will
- Sexual harassment
- Racial harassment
- Homophobic harassment
- Exclusion from social groups
- Sending to Coventry
- Making unkind remarks
- Removing/hiding items of property

The issue of bullying provides a challenge to all schools as well as to society as a whole. We realise that bullying is an aspect of pastoral care that needs continued attention and that Castle School cannot be complacent.

Our aim is to foster an environment of mutual respect and courtesy where bullying has no place. Through a programme of total commitment from students, staff and parents, we believe that we can keep Castle School a 'bully-free' zone.

We hope that our school ethos of high expectations for good behaviour and respect for others will deter any form of bullying totally. These expectations reflect those outlined in the School's Behavior Policy.

Instances of bullying may occur at Castle School – we recognise that these usually take place away from staff and that it is often difficult to establish the true facts of an incident. As soon as a member of staff becomes aware of a bullying problem, the incident will be acknowledged by that member of staff, a written record made and the information passed on to the Head Teacher or the Principal.

The aim of the whole school policy must focus on creating a culture in which bullying is explicitly recognised for what it is and which is strongly disapproving of bullying behaviour. At the same time the *geography* of bullying behaviour needs to be considered so that areas within the school where students may feel vulnerable or isolated are, as far as possible, eliminated.

## The Consequences of Bullying

- Bullying may lead to physical injury.
- Children who are bullied suffer great psychological stress and there are a number of well-known symptoms. These include confusion, illness and nervousness. Children may feel powerless, rejection and isolation. Some children suffer from impaired concentration, sleep difficulties and depression – they may become withdrawn and suffer from a loss of self-esteem and a negative self image.
- Children who are bullied may play truant or suffer from school phobia. The amount and quality of their work may suffer.

It is vital that staff, pupils and parents are made aware of these consequences and make known any suspicions or observations as soon as possible.

## A Whole School Policy

There are three main factors that reduce and remove bullying:

1. Fostering an attitude amongst pupils that bullying is unacceptable, that it should be reported and that they should be involved in the formulation and implementation of the school's policy.
2. Emphasising the idea that the school will not tolerate bullying and will take action when it occurs.
3. Encouraging staff to be aware, concerned and vigilant.

Castle School seeks to tackle bullying in a variety of ways:

- Students in each year group are encouraged to talk about any instances of bullying of which they have experience, or in which they have previously been involved. Bullying is mentioned in school assemblies or as a topic for class discussion in appropriate lessons.
- Students are made aware that all cases of bullying will be investigated and taken seriously. They realise that the school will act promptly and firmly to combat bullying whenever and wherever it occurs.
- All students with problems are encouraged to approach a member of staff and will be offered opportunity and a private space in which to talk in confidence.
- Parents are encouraged to contact staff if they have concerns about bullying.
- Written records of suspected or actual incidents are made.

## Response to Incidents of Bullying

However serious, any response to incidents of bullying should:

- Be clear, honest and direct.
- Be immediate, with possible follow-up in the longer term.
- Involve recording what has happened, who was involved and what action was taken.
- Involve the family at an early stage.
- Provide opportunities for the students to discuss with one another ways of resolving the problem.

Solutions could include strategies to help students develop harmonious activities, for example looking for ways to extend their friendship groupings. Careful monitoring of the students concerned by members of staff in the classroom or on duty in the playground is essential.

The Head Teacher will inform parents in writing of the outcome of any investigations and of any immediate sanctions or threatened sanctions should there be a recurrence.

## Education and Prevention

1. All pupils are used as positive resources in countering bullying.
2. Pupils will be encouraged to talk and listen to each other.
3. The school's approach to bullying will be emphasised during school assemblies and during specially designated events.
4. The school's approach to bullying will be communicated across the curriculum.
5. Pupils will be encouraged to help shy children or newcomers feel welcome and accepted.

## Communication

Throughout a case of bullying, good communication is vital, especially with those pupils involved. Staff should make clear to parents of victims and bullies the actions being taken, why they are being taken and what parents can do to help. It is vital that pupils and parents know that the school is taking any matter of bullying seriously.

It is vitally important that pupils know who to turn to and to whom they can talk in confidence. They need to know that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon discreetly and sensitively.

It is important that everyone in the school plays an important part in the school's anti-bullying strategy and is aware of its consequences.



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