

## BULLYING IS AN ABUSE OF POWER

BULLYING is a deliberate form of behaviour intended to hurt, threaten or frighten another person.

BULLYING comes in many forms.

BULLYING is **not** the same thing as an argument or a fight between equals.



## THE FOLLOWING BEHAVIOURS CAN BE PART OF BULLYING

- Making hurtful or racist comments.
- Deliberately punching, hitting, bumping or tripping.
- Repeatedly “putting down” someone.
- Making threats.
- Deliberately ignoring or avoiding a person.
- Taking or damaging personal property.
- Sending unpleasant notes (handwritten or electronic e.g. texting, msn, Facebook).

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED

- Anyone who sees, hears or observes bullying has a responsibility to do something about it.
- Care enough to take action, even if you are not personally affected.
- Support the victim in a non-aggressive way. (Don't get involved in name calling or violence).



Report the problem to a member of staff, Deputy Principal or the Principal.

## WHAT CHILDREN CAN DO IF THEY ARE BULLIED

Believe in yourself. You have the right to feel safe and valued.

Try to ignore the bullying. If you show that you are not upset, the bully may lose interest.

Tell the bully to stop. Speak firmly and calmly and say that their behaviour is not acceptable to you.

Avoid being alone in places where bullying happens.

Share the problem with your family and friends.

Report the problem to a member of staff, the Principal or Deputy Principal.

**BULLYING IS NEVER OK!!**



## PARENTS CAN HELP

- Take an active interest in your child's social life and what is happening at school.
- Encourage your child to bring friends home and to accept and tolerate differences in others.
- Make sure your child understands the school's expectations of their behaviour.
- Build a child's self confidence by recognising their positive qualities and valuing them for who they are.
- Be alert for signs of distress in your child such as unwillingness to attend school or lower academic performance.
- Listen to your child & acknowledge their feelings and fears.
- Discuss and encourage constructive ways to respond if your child's rights are being infringed.
- Set a positive example of your own behaviour.
- Act (report the problem) if you suspect bullying is occurring.



## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### ***Students***

Students are not expected to deal with incidents of bullying on their own. All staff will work with students to prevent and overcome any difficulties they face. Staff will respond positively and immediately to reports of bullying.

### ***Staff***

Staff will not tolerate bullying and are aware of the nature of bullying. They will take a 'no blame' approach to dealing with incidents of bullying and make use of the "Pikas Method of Shared Concern" in responding to bullying incidents. Bullying is considered to be a whole community concern and staff will work towards reducing the frequency, duration and severity of bullying incidents through the implementation of this school wide approach.

### ***Parents***

Parents are encouraged to support their child by using the strategies outlined under the Parents Can Help section of this policy.

## **THE PIKAS METHOD OF SHARED CONCERN**

The Method of Shared Concern aims to change the behaviour of students involved in bullying incidents and improve the situation of the student being bullied. The method employs a non-punitive, non-blaming and non-aggressive approach to individual and group discussion of the incidents. Each student involved in the bullying incident participates in a series of individual discussions with a staff member, beginning with the student who witnessed the bullying incident. Clearly defined steps are used to reach a point where the student/s bullying agrees that the student being bullied is having a difficult time. The student is then encouraged to suggest and try out ways of helping to improve the situation for the student being bullied. The student being bullied is also provided with the opportunity to discuss the incident and encouraged to consider ways in which he/she can improve his/her own situation.

This method of managing bullying incidents is based on the following principles:

- Bullying often occurs in a group context;
- Changing the social dynamics that maintain bullying will prevent further bullying incidents;
- Promoting a shift in behaviour by encouraging empathy and concern for others; and
- Punitive measures model and reinforce the use of power to meet needs and wants and put students at risk of revenge.

## **ROSSMOYNE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

*Rossmoyne Primary School aims to enhance each student's academic, social, creative, physical and personal development, thereby enabling them to fulfil their potential and contribute to the development of society.*



### **OUR SCHOOL**

- Fosters a positive school environment.
- Acts to prevent bullying by helping students to develop appropriate social skills, including strategies to cope with being bullied.
- Has a strategy for staff to detect and deal with bullying in the classroom and playground.
- Provides support for students who become involved in incidents of bullying. (Both victim and the student bullying need help) and makes use of mediation processes.
- Maintains close communication with parents.

Appendix: A script that may be used to facilitate a Shared Concern Session follows.

### Steps of 'Shared Concern'

#### Meeting with a child who has been bullying

##### Step 1

*"I have asked you to come and speak with me because I have heard that some bad things have been happening to 'x' that are making him/her very unhappy at school."*

- *Wait for the child to respond.*
- *If the student doesn't respond ask "Do you know anything about this that might help me?"*
- *Do not try to force the child to 'own up' or admit to his/her involvement, simply to acknowledge that there is a situation, which is making x unhappy.*
- *If the child complains about x don't question just let the child explain their situation."*

##### Step 2

*"So it sounds like x is having a bit of a tough time."*

- *Wait for the child to respond.*
- *As soon as the child agrees and acknowledges that x is having a bad time and is unhappy move to Step 3.*
- *If the child says that x is to blame, accept the point but suggest that x is still having a bad time and is unhappy.*

##### Step 3

*"Well I was wondering what you could do to help to improve the situation for x to help him/her to become happier at school."*

- *Accept any suggestions with positive feedback.*
- *Don't question their suggestions if they are positive.*
- *If the suggestions are negative, ask the student whether they think this would help x to feel happier.*
- *If the student can't think of anything to do or is resistant to the idea ask him/her to take some time to think about something they could do to help make x feel happier then move to Step 4.*

##### Step 4

*"O.K. I'll see you next week to find out how you are getting on."*

- *If the child had an idea then you will say you will see them to “discuss how their idea went when they tried it.”*
- *If they didn't have an idea then say you will see them to “discuss the idea they have come up with.”*

### **Meeting with the child who has been bullied**

#### **Step 1**

*“I have asked you to come and speak with me because I have heard that some bad things have been happening to you that are making you very unhappy at school.”*

- *Wait for the child to respond.*
- *Let the child explain their situation. Then simply acknowledge that there is a situation, which is making him/her unhappy.*

#### **Step 2**

*“So it sounds like you are having a bit of a tough time.”*

- *Wait for the child to respond.*
- *As soon as the child agrees and acknowledges go to Step 3.*

#### **Step 3 (a)**

*“I have spoken to a few students about your situation and they have made a few good suggestions to help you to feel happier and safer at school.”*

- *If the student is concerned about this reassure him/her that you will be keeping a close eye on what is happening.*
- *Let the student know that there may be a few changes in some of the children's behaviour towards him/her.*
- *If you feel the child could help the situation by changing some of his/her behaviours go to Step 3(b).*

### **Step 3 (b)**

*"I was wondering what you could do to help to improve the situation for yourself to help you to become happier at school."*

- *Accept any suggestions with positive feedback.*
- *Don't question their suggestions if they are positive.*
- *If the suggestions are negative, ask the student whether they think this would help him/her to feel happier.*
- *If the student can't think of anything to do or is resistant to the idea ask him/her to take some time to think about something he/she could do to help to feel happier then move to Step 4.*

### **Step 4**

*"O.K. I'll see you next week to find out how you are getting on."*

- *If the child had an idea then you will say you will see them to "discuss how their idea went when they tried it."*
- *If they didn't have an idea then say you will see them to "discuss the idea they have come up with."*

### **Meeting with a group of children who are suspected of bullying**

*After meeting with individuals and when real progress towards improving the situation has been confirmed, a meeting with the group of suspected bullies is arranged.*

#### **Step 1**

*Compliment members on the progress that has been made.*

#### **Step 2**

*Respond to, (or elicit) a suggestion that the victim be invited to join them for the final meeting.*

*Reassurances must be given that the group will act positively towards the victim at such a meeting.*

#### **Final Meeting**

*The final meeting is to provide confirmation that the bullying is over and acceptable relations between all the students has been established.*

*This may also include an agreement, signed by those concerned, on how the students will behave towards each other in future.*