



Powerstown Educate Together National School

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Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy has been formulated by Powerstown ETNS to assist teachers, pupils and parents in making an informed decision in relation to anti-bullying and to comply with legislation and Department of Education and Skills circulars.

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School Details:

Name: Powerstown Educate Together National School
Address: Powerstown Road
Tyrrelstown
Dublin 15

Telephone: 01 8262552 / 086 403 8901
Email: info@powerstownet.com
Roll Number: 20384J
Principal: Helena Regan

The school day starts at 8.30 am until 1.10pm for Junior and Senior Infants, and from 8.30 am until 2.10 pm for all other classes.

Policy Introduction

This policy is based on the DES guidelines “Countering Bullying Behaviour”. It aims to produce a safe and caring environment in which all children can develop to their full potential.

The school does not tolerate or condone bullying of any form or at any level of the school community. The Board of Management is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community – pupils, staff, and parents are enabled to act effectively to deal with bullying. This policy guides action and organisation within the school for preventing and responding to bullying.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying may be defined as repeated acts of aggression; which may be verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

Bullying may take many different forms such as physical aggression, damage to property, theft of property, extortion, intimidation, abusive telephone calls, isolation, name calling, use of homophobic language, writing notes, social networking, blogging, emailing or texting. As a form of aggressive behaviour it is usually hurtful and deliberate. It is persistent over time and makes it difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It is important not to confuse bullying with isolated incidents of aggressive or antisocial behaviour, which must not be condoned. However when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it becomes bullying.

All members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying.

Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board is committed to providing time and resources for the

implementation of the policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

School Staff

The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance. Children's self-esteem will be developed through celebrating individual differences, achievements, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school. Teachers will help pupils to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others. Relationships with pupils will be based on mutual respect and trust so that pupils will have confidence in the school staff. Teachers will be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to pupils who disclose incidence of bullying and investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying.

Teachers will discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with the pupils and use behavioural management strategies which focus on problem solving and enable pupils to take an active role in finding a solution to problems.

The Golden rules are followed in Powerstown ETNS and underpin the behaviour policy. The school is also involved in a training programme called *The Incredible years training Programme* which fosters good behaviour among all in the school community

The formal curriculum of the school will also be used to educate all pupils against bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying issues may be raised through the school religion programme, the Social Personal and Health Education programme, the Stay Safe Programme, the Arts and/or Circle time.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to be tolerant and to have mutual respect for each other. Pupils should report incidents of bullying to their parents and teachers. To follow the golden rules at all times.

Parents

Encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour both at home and at school.

Encourage children to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression.

Encourage children to share, to be kind, to be caring, and to be understanding towards others.

Watch out for signs and symptoms that your child is being bullied or is bullying others.

Don't dismiss your instincts as being wrong.

Discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with her/him.

Support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat bullying.

Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Bullying Incidents

Bullying incidents should be reported to the class teacher and/or the supervising teacher for investigation. This reporting may be done by the pupil, parent or a friend. All reported incidents which are serious or are part of a pattern of behaviour will be noted, investigated and treated as circumstances require. Serious cases of bullying will be reported to the Principal. Reports of bullying behaviour on the way to and from school will be investigated by the Principal. Each class has a discipline book which follows them throughout the school. There is also a yard book which records incidents in the yard.

Responding to Bullying

Support will be provided for anyone who is bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or other teacher, along with continuing support when they feel they may need it. A victim will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them.

The school will inform parents/guardians of what has happened and of the measures being taken to help them, encourage them to report further incidences if they occur.

Help and support will be sought for a bully. This will include speaking with them to discover why they became involved, informing their parents/guardians and continuing to work with them in order to modify their behaviour. The school code of behaviour applies to bullying. The bully will be helped to see things from the victims' point of view. Bullies may be excluded from the playground at lunch break or subject to special monitoring procedures and if bullying continues they may be suspended in accordance with procedure.

Any pupil who is involved in retaliation against a pupil who reports bullying will be subject to the school code of discipline. Incidents of bullying will be used as opportunities for re-enforcing the anti-bullying policy of the school. Follow-up meetings may be arranged to assess progress and/or restore relationships.

Bullying, sexual harassment or other harassment in workplace

The procedure set out below may be initiated in relation to any of the following circumstances, which may occur in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment:

- adult bullying;
- sexual harassment; or
- harassment on other specified discriminatory grounds which could, in the circumstances, be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating.

The BOM of Powerstown Educate Together NS adopt a very strong stance on bullying in the workplace and operate procedures on bullying, sexual harassment or other harassment on specified discriminatory grounds. This includes a clear statement that any such behaviour is not acceptable within the school. In this regard, it should be noted that a complaint of sexual harassment or bullying may result in disciplinary action. Where a complaint of sexual harassment or bullying is not upheld, no action shall be taken against the complainant provided the allegation was made in good faith. If the complaint was brought maliciously, it should be treated as misconduct and the disciplinary procedure invoked.

The procedure outlined below is specifically designed to address adult bullying, sexual harassment or harassment on other specified discriminatory grounds, in an industrial relations framework.

It is also open to any member who considers that s/he is being discriminated against, to contact his/her Union / CEC District Representative or INTO Head Office with a view to referring a complaint to the Director of Equality Investigations or Labour Court, as the case may be.

Adult bullying

There is currently no uniform definition of workplace bullying available. The INTO policy document *Staff Relations: a report on adult bullying in schools* relies on the definition that bullying is “repeated aggressive behaviour of a verbal, physical or psychological nature”. The document presents a range of other definitions in use by various unions and organisations and also describes the forms and effects of bullying and profiles both the typical victim and bully.

Adult bullying can take many different forms which usually include:

- intimidation or harassment
- aggression
- verbal abuse
- humiliation
- undermining
- dominance or abuse of power
- different or unfavourable treatment
- exclusion or isolation

Key features of adult bullying are that the behaviour is generally:

- persistent and/or systematic
- unwanted
- subtle
- non-physical

However, for the purposes of the procedures outlined in this document, management and INTO have adopted the definition of bullying set out by the Health and Safety Authority which is:

“Bullying in the workplace is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person or persons. Bullying is where aggression or cruelty, viciousness, intimidation or a need to humiliate, dominate the relationships. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while to be condemned, should not be described as bullying. In the workplace environment there can be conflicts and interpersonal difficulties. Many of these are legitimate industrial relations difficulties which should be dealt with through the appropriate industrial relations channels. Only aggressive behaviour which is systematic and ongoing should be regarded as bullying.”

Accordingly, it is the view of INTO and management, that the exercise of legitimate management functions, in a reasonable and fair manner, does not constitute bullying.

Bullying/harassment procedure

Preamble

The procedure outlined below is designed to address adult bullying, sexual harassment or other harassment arising in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment, in a fair and effective manner. In implementing the procedure, it is recommended that emphasis should be placed on assuring

the party who considers that s/he is being bullied/harassed that his/her complaint is acknowledged, that the matter will be investigated effectively and sensitively and in accordance with due process.

Equally, where it is found that bullying or harassment has occurred, the emphasis, firstly, is to ensure that the offending behaviour immediately cease and secondly, to help the offending party acknowledge that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and that steps must be taken to address the matter constructively thereby avoiding any recurrence.

It is important to ensure that resolution is achieved at the earliest opportunity. Further, it may be appropriate for the victim or the offender to attend counselling or obtain such other help as may be required.

Stage 1: Decide to address the matter

1. The party (party a) who considers that s/he is being bullied, sexually harassed or harassed on other specified discriminatory grounds, should decide to address the matter. However, in light of the potential effects of bullying or harassment on an individual, including loss of confidence, extreme upset, anxiety or fear, party a may initially decide to seek representative or other assistance, including Employee Assistance Scheme or other counselling, in order to consider the most appropriate application of the procedures, in the circumstances.
2. Party (A) should keep a record of the pattern of behaviour or instances where s/he considers that bullying/harassment has occurred. The record should contain details such as dates, times, persons present, details of what was said or what occurred.

Stage 2: Informally address the problem

1. The party who considers that he/she is being bullied, sexually harassed or harassed on other discriminatory grounds (party a), should request a meeting with the other party (b), in order to discuss matters. The following should apply:

- where necessary, the meeting may be facilitated by a third party, generally a teaching colleague;
- party a should clearly outline his/her difficulties and should clearly object to the bullying/harassment and request that it stop;
- it is important that party a bear in mind, that the other member of staff may not be aware that his/her behaviour is causing difficulty;
- both parties should seek to resolve their differences and establish a pattern of interaction exclusive of any forms of bullying/harassment;
- Party (B) may respond to party (A) at that meeting or if requested, should be given an opportunity to consider his/her response, in which case the meeting may be adjourned. Party b should respond in a constructive manner;
- The resolution, as appropriate, may include any of the following, e.g. a commitment to cease the particular behaviour, modify the behaviour, plan to eliminate situations where the parties would be in conflict or monitoring.

Alternatively, it may emerge as a result of the discussions between the parties, that there may have been a degree of misunderstanding in relation to certain behaviours and the resolution may make provision for compromise or appropriate explanation or acknowledgement.

1. If there is no satisfactory indication of resolution between the parties, party (A) should refer the complaint to stage 3, i.e. formal procedures.

Stage 3: Principal teacher or chairperson of the board of management

1. Stage 3 provides a mechanism for the principal teacher to intervene and resolve the matter. However, if the principal teacher is one of the parties, the chairperson of the board of management, should then be involved, in an individual capacity, in order to achieve resolution. In circumstances where the chairperson may also be involved at stage 2, another member of the board, may be designated to intervene.

2. Party (A) should advise party (B) that he/she is proceeding with stage 3.

3. Party (A) should state his/her complaint in writing and request the principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management, as the case may be) to investigate the matter.

4. The principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management, as the case may be) should:

- obtain background details including details of what occurred at the previous stage;
- consider the pattern of behaviour and the timescale;
- hear the parties and seek to resolve the matter;
- act in a fair and impartial manner and deal with the matter sensitively having regard to the nature of the problem and the principles of due process;
- Exercise judgement and make decisions which s/he considers necessary to resolve matters.

5. The outcome of the discussions should be noted by the parties.

- The matter should be dealt with confidentially.
- Where resolution has not been possible and particularly, where there is a likelihood of the offending behaviour continuing, either party or the principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management as the case may be) should refer the matter to the board of management in accordance with stage 4 below.

Stage 4: Board of management

- It is open to any of the parties or the principal teacher (or chairperson of the board of management, as the case may be) to refer the matter to the board of management for investigation. The referral should be in writing and dated and should include a copy of the written complaint.
- The board of management should consider the issues and investigate the matter:
- The board may enquire into the background of the difficulties including obtaining details on the sequence of initiatives taken at previous stages;
- The board or the chairperson of the board may meet teachers individually or collectively and may also request written submissions from the parties, having regard also to the principles of due process;
- The board may request the principal teacher to furnish a written submission;
- The board may afford the parties an opportunity to present their case orally at a board meeting, in each other's presence;
- Following oral presentations the board of management may designate the chairperson to meet with the parties again, separately or jointly, if further clarification is required or to work towards resolution;
- The board of management may convene a number of meetings in order to achieve resolution;
- The board of management shall act in a fair and impartial manner in order to achieve resolution and shall deal with the matter sensitively, having regard to the nature of the problem.

3. Having considered all matters, the board of management should reach a view on the matter not later than 20 school days after receipt of the written request/referral.

4. Where the board of management finds that bullying/harassment has not occurred, both parties should be informed accordingly. No action shall be taken against the complainant provided the allegation was made in good faith. If the complaint was brought maliciously, it should be treated as misconduct and appropriate action taken.

5. Where the board of management finds that bullying/harassment has occurred, the board should deal with the matter appropriately and effectively.

This may include:

- the issuing of a clear warning that bullying/harassment is not acceptable in the school workplace and that it will not be tolerated;
- a demand that all forms of bullying/harassment cease and that acceptable patterns of interaction be established between the parties;

- an instruction to the offending party that s/he apologise/ express regret or give an assurance that the bullying/harassment behaviour will cease;
- seeking a commitment to attend counselling or the welfare service;
- more serious disciplinary sanctions as may be commensurate and appropriate, such as:
 - oral warning
 - written reprimand
 - written warning
 - final written warning
 - suspension
 - dismissal

6. As part of any resolution, the board of management should monitor the situation and should put systems in place to ensure that it is kept informed and that resolutions are being implemented. The board of management should keep matters under review.

Appendix 1 Advice for Parents

Effects of Bullying

Bullying can affect pupils in many different ways. When pupils are bullied their lives may be made miserable. They may suffer injury. They may be unhappy about coming to school. They may lose self-confidence and self esteem, blaming themselves for the bullying. Some children may experience stressful symptoms such as stomach aches and headaches, nightmares or panic attacks. (This form of unhappiness is likely to affect their concentration and learning). If unchallenged other pupils can learn that bullying is a quick and effective way of getting what they want.

Indications of Bullying Behaviour – Signs and Symptoms

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).
- 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.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress – stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.
- 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 her/him.

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

What to do if your child is being bullied

- Discuss the experience with your child to find out the precise details of what has happened.
- Reassure her/him that you and the school will help her/him.
- Discuss with her/him what to do next – he may be able to suggest strategies for dealing with it.
- Encourage her/him to tell his teacher.
- Contact the school as soon as possible.
- Follow-up to ensure that the matter is dealt with and resolved.

What to tell your child to do if someone they know is being bullied

- Tell a teacher (privately if necessary)
- Tell his/her parents – they will contact the school.
- Talk to the person who is being bullied – you may be able to help her/him.
- Reject bullying behaviour among your friends – tell them that it is wrong to bully.
- Help the bullied person to get away from the situation.

- Know and follow the school code of discipline.

What to tell your child to do if you are being bullied

- Tell the teacher immediately.
- Tell your parents when you get home.
- Help the teacher to investigate it.
- Tell a friend about what is happening.
- Tell the bully to stop.