



ADDRESSING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS PROCEDURES

OCTOBER 2014



MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

**ADDRESSING BULLYING
BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS**

PROCEDURES





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01

INTRODUCTION

1.1

Whilst this document stipulates sanctions to bullying actions, it is imperative that schools assume a proactive role and carry out preventive measures in partnership with the Anti-Bullying Service and any other professional as deemed necessary.

1.2

These procedures come into place once:

- (i) the school guidelines for addressing bullying behaviour in schools are established.
- (ii) the designated member of staff has been identified.
- (iii) all stakeholders are informed of the policy, procedures and who the designated member of staff responsible for the Policy on Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools is.

02

PROCEDURES

2.1 Reporting

2.1.1

School staff and other professionals working within all national educational establishments who witness a bullying incident are to immediately verbally intervene to stop the bullying behaviour.

2.1.2

When a bullying incident is reported the member of the school staff should listen to the person reporting the incident in a non-judgemental manner.

2.1.3

Reporting procedures can be found in Appendix A.

2.2

All bullying behaviour is to be brought to the attention of the designated member of staff and noted on the Incident Report Book (Appendix B).

2.3

After getting approval from the Head of School the designated member of staff is responsible to ensure that the parents of the student who bullied others are informed by means of a letter (Appendix C in first time episode, Appendix D when the student is involved in a subsequent bullying behaviour). The parents of the victim are also to be informed about the incident.

2.4

The designated member of staff is to discuss each incident with the Guidance Teacher. Together they can be guided by the Examples of Possible Restorative Consequences identified in Appendix E. Other steps which may be taken include:

- (i) Follow up sessions with Guidance Teacher for both the victim of bullying and the perpetrator.
- (ii) Referral to the Anti-bullying Service (Appendices F, G).
- (iii) Provision of social skills training for the perpetrator.
- (iv) Encourage a circle of friends to support the victim.
- (v) Taking the case to the Behaviour Management Committee.

03

APPENDIX A

Reporting procedures

All information and reporting needs to come to the attention of the designated member of staff responsible for the implementation of the 'Addressing Bullying Behaviour In Schools'. The SMT, school support staff and support services staff can continue with their interventions.

- / Parents of both parties are to be involved at an early stage. They are to be informed about the incident and the actions that need to be taken. The school should seek parents' support to help the children.
- / Parents and students are duty bound to co-operate in addressing the bullying behaviour and should support the school's effort in empowering students to be accountable for their actions.

- / Adults who are dealing with students who are reporting bullying behaviour as well as the students who are carrying out the bullying behaviour are to take a neutral, unbiased approach as much as possible, adopting a problem solving, restorative approach.
- / It is best to explore cases outside the classroom situation to make sure that confidentiality is ensured.
- / When investigating a case, sensitivity and respect for all those involved is to be applied, giving particular attention to all the rights of the persons concerned.
- / Witnesses of the bullying incident can often provide useful information.
- / In the case of a group incident, members should be addressed individually prior to meeting as a group. Each group member should have the opportunity to give his/her view whilst receiving and giving feedback (with support from the adults involved).
- / All parties involved need to be aware of the severity of the bullying incident and therefore the relevant sanctions will be enforced as necessary.
- / Monitoring and follow-up meetings are imperative to ensure that the bullying behaviour has ceased, and that issues between the students have been resolved or contained for the benefit of both perpetrator and victim.
- / Every adult aware of any form of bullying is duty-bound to take action as outlined below.
- / Incidents must be initially addressed at school level. All parties involved should be given the chance to have their say so that unacceptable behaviour is stopped.

Reporting of Student to Student Bullying Incidents

In the case of student to student bullying reported to any member of the SMT, teachers (including teachers from the Psycho-Social Services, Guidance and Peripatetic teachers), LSAs, counsellors, visiting professionals from the Psycho-Social Services the following actions are to be taken:

1. Listen to the reporting student.
2. Speak to the perpetrator (always in the first instance speak to the reporting student and alleged perpetrator separately).
3. Speak to witnesses of the incident for further clarification as required.
4. Inform the designated member of staff of the reported bullying incident.
5. The member of staff and the designated member of staff may agree that the member of staff can continue to address the issue.
6. In the instance when the member of staff and designated member of staff decide that the incident requires more specialised intervention the designated member of staff refers to the guidance teacher.
7. The guidance teacher investigates the case further, deciding whether it is conflict or bullying and uses his good judgement to proceed accordingly.
8. Following interventions by the guidance teacher, if the case is still unresolved, the guidance teacher is expected to report back to the designated member of staff and a referral to the Anti-bullying Service is made by either party.

If student to student bullying is reported to clerical/auxillary/technical staff members, they are to listen sensitively to the student and report immediately to the designated member of staff or SMT member. The designated member of staff follows the above actions (1-8).

Parents reporting bullying incidents are to be immediately guided to the Head of School or designated member of staff. The designated member of staff follows the above actions (1-8).

Cyber bullying

In the case of student to student cyber bullying reported to teachers (including teachers from the Psycho-Social Services, Guidance and Peripatetic teachers), LSAs, counsellors, Visiting professionals from the Psycho-Social Services the following actions are to be taken:

1. Immediately inform the SMT who will in turn inform the parents of the students concerned.
2. The SMT is to keep a record of the meetings with the parents and the decisions taken (if any).
3. The SMT is to advise the parents to file a report with the police. This is to be noted in the incident report log book together with the record of the meeting.
4. Should the SMT be further concerned about the safety of the student/s, they are to inform APPOGG about this incident.

Adult to Student Bullying

Any form of bullying from adult to student is considered as child abuse and is to be immediately brought to the attention of the Head of School (refer to Child Safety Services Policy).

The Head of School is obliged to immediately refer the case to the Director for Student Services in writing, copying in the College Principal. The Director, Department of Student Services will set up a board to investigate the case. The outcome of the investigation is forwarded to the Director General, Directorate for Educational Services. Where allegations are shown to be unfounded, the Directorate disposes of all collated data related to the case. In the event that the allegations are substantiated, the Director General is to proceed according to the established regulations and legislation in force from time to time.

Student to Adult Bullying

This type of bullying behaviour is to be dealt with at SMT level. Further advice and support is to be sought from the College Principal, who refers to the Director, Department Student Services.

Adult to Adult Bullying

In this case, reference needs to be made to the regulations and legislation in force from time to time.

APPENDIX B

Incident Report Book Template

Name of Student who is targeted: Class:

Name of Student who is carrying out bullying behaviour: Class:

Person Reporting:

Date of Incident: Time of Incident:

Place where behaviour took place:

Description of bullying behaviour:

Initial Plan of Action to address bullying behaviour:

Date when letter is sent to Parent of perpetrator: Date when family of victim was informed and how message was conveyed:

Action Taken:

Was issue resolved:

APPENDIX C

Letter to Parents informing them of first incident of Bullying

[Insert College letterhead]

Date:

Dear Parent,

Please be informed that of class was involved in a bullying incident at school today. Below is a brief summary of the incident.

Time:

Location:

Observed Bullying Behaviour:

At our school we aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for everyone within the school and therefore take bullying very seriously. Please be informed that, from now on, we will be monitoring your child's behaviour very closely.

Please contact us, so that together we can discuss positive and constructive strategies to help prevent your child from being involved in similar incidents in the future. We look forward to working with you to help resolve this situation.

Sincerely,
Head of School

APPENDIX D

Letter to Parents informing them of a subsequent bullying behaviour

[Insert College letterhead]

Date:

Dear Parent,
We need to bring to your attention that [redacted] of class [redacted] was again involved in another bullying incident at school today. Below is a brief summary of the incident.

Time:

[redacted]

Location:

[redacted]

Observed Bullying Behaviour:

[redacted]

As mentioned in our previous communication, at our school we aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for everyone and therefore take any form of bullying very seriously. We request that you contact our school immediately to discuss your child's actions as it is imperative that you cooperate with the school in your child's interest.

Sincerely,
Head of School

APPENDIX E

Without prejudice to any disciplinary measures, the college/school may wish to consider the following:

Examples of Possible Restorative Consequences

Infractions	In principle, in all infractions the perpetrator must verbally apologise to the teacher/victim/s in front of all those who witnessed the bullying incident.
Property damage (e.g. school equipment)	Help clean, repair or pay for damages.
Putdowns, gossip, or interpersonal conflicts	Write a brief reflective account on how it feels to be put down or gossiped about.
Threats, harassment and offensive, aggressive language.	Depending on the severity of the case, the perpetrator is required to take part in community work on Saturday morning.
Bullying younger students	The alleged perpetrator is required to conduct a short presentation in the class of the victim/s about a related topic (e.g. being a good friend) during PSCD.
Ridicule, homophobic comments, or racial slurs towards another individual or group	The perpetrator is required to make a short presentation about the difficulties that minority groups can face in the school setting, addressing his peers during an organised activity in a context of diversity.

Physical threats	During the detention the student will prepare a brief presentation about self-control with the help of guidance teacher/any other support teacher. This presentation will be delivered to his classmates during the next PSCD lesson. Depending on the severity of the case, conduct community work on Saturday morning.
Theft and extortion	Return the stolen items together with a written apology. If the items are not in a condition to be returned, the perpetrator must be made to pay for their replacement. If this is not possible the perpetrator is asked how he can make up for the harm done.
Cyber-bullying	The student is to prepare a poster about the negative effects of cyberbullying and/or providing tips on how to stay safe online. The perpetrator can also choose to give a presentation to the students on this same issue (together with support).
Bullying on school transport	The perpetrator works with either the College's Youth Worker or the Health and Safety teacher on any project that these might be working on.

APPENDIX F

Anti-Bullying Service

The Anti-Bullying Service forms part of the Safe Schools Programme in the Education Psycho-Social Services within the Student Services Department.

Mission Statement

Personnel aim to ensure that the schools are providing a safe and secure environment, where students are allowed to flourish in their social capacities and academic capabilities. The role is to ensure that students are feeling secure in a non-threatening environment, and to encourage and motivate students to respect each other, as well as accept and allow for personal differences.

Raising Awareness

- The main bulk of the work to raise awareness about the issues and effects of bullying is through meetings, sessions, class interventions and sessions with parents, students and teachers.
- Talks are held with large groups of parents. Circle time is carried out with smaller groups to help parents understand when their child is being bullied and how to go about it. Moreover, they are encouraged to avoid reacting defensively if the school approaches them saying that their child is bullying others. These sessions have proven to be very fruitful with positive feedback from both parents and staff.
- Talks are held for students on a variety of topics, such as the importance of respecting each other and valuing friendships, how to choose friends and different ways of assertively coping with bullying behaviours. Furthermore, other talks address cyberbullying and provide examples of why it is important to keep safe online.

- School Development Programmes are organised about the psychological effects that bullying behaviour can have on students, whilst increasing the awareness of their important role in stopping teasing behaviour and conflict. These programmes offer techniques how to appropriately deal with instances of bullying behaviours and how the referral system works.

Prevention Strategies

- The service organises a number of prevention activities in schools, focusing more on the value and importance of friendships, and giving talks promoting practising empathy with peers, developing positive social behaviours and the importance of inclusion.
- The team also provide a range of activities to maintain a steady input into the prevention of bullying in schools.
- Apart from students, the service trains members of administration, staff, and parents about prevention measures, with an emphasis on the long term negative psychological impact that bullying may have on students.
- The team also suggests that a friendship week is organised in schools. A whole school during the scholastic year can be dedicated to hold a friendship week with an emphasis on challenging beliefs and attitudes that give rise to bullying whilst promoting desired behaviours which lead to a happier school environment. This may involve a thematic approach. It is imperative to continuously promote and role-model what has been learned during the friendship week throughout the scholastic year.

APPENDIX G

Safe Schools Programme
Anti-Bullying Service - Referral Form

DIRETTORAT GHAL SERVIZZI EDUKATTIVI
DIPARTIMENT SERVIZZI GHALL-ISTUDENT
SERVIZZI EDUKATTIVI PSIKOSOCJALI,
TRIQ FRA GAETANO PACE FORNO,
HAMRUN HMR 1100
TEL / FAX: 21225285; 21233698



DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
STUDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT
EDUCATION PSYCHO-SOCIAL SERVICES,
FRA GAETANO PACE FORNO STREET,
HAMRUN HMR 1100
TEL / FAX: 21225285; 21233698

**SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAMME
ANTI-BULLYING SERVICE – REFERRAL FORM**

ALLEGED PERPETRATOR/S:		CLASS/ FORM:	ALLEGED VICTIM/S:		CLASS/ FORM:
NAME OF PARENT(S)/ LEGAL GUARDIAN(S):		NAME OF PARENT(S)/ LEGAL GUARDIAN(S):		TEL/MOB:	
TEL/MOB:		CASE REFERRED BY :		PROFESSION :	
COLLEGE:		SIGNATURE:		DATE:	
SCHOOL:		DATE:			
CLASS:					
E-MAIL:					
TEL:					
REASON FOR REFERRAL:			INTERVENTIONS CARRIED OUT:		
TYPE OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR:			DATE		
PHYSICAL <input type="checkbox"/>			OUTCOME		
VERBAL <input type="checkbox"/>					
SOCIAL <input type="checkbox"/>					
CYBER <input type="checkbox"/>					
OTHER: _____					

OTHER PROFESSIONALS/AGENCIES INVOLVED:		
NAME	PROFESSION / AGENCY	CONTACT DETAILS
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

HAVE PARENTS / LEGAL GUARDIANS BEEN NOTIFIED OF THIS REFERRAL?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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