

COLÁSITE CHILL MHANTÁIN

SCHOOL POLICY ON BULLYING

School Mission Statement

Anti-Bullying Policy:

Every student has the right to pursue his/her education in a safe and secure environment, free from the fear of being bullied in any form. Students are strongly encouraged to report any incident which makes them feel threatened or unsafe. Firm steps will be taken to stamp out all cases of bullying.

Definition of bullying:

Bullying can take many different forms which include:

- Physical aggression – pushing, hitting etc.
- Damage to property – stealing pens, pencils etc., breaking rulers and tearing books.
- Extortion – demands for money, food, sweets etc.
- Intimidation – verbal threats etc.
- Ridiculing a person's work or ideas.
- Horseplay, offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact.
- Name calling: hurtful or humiliating names.
- Personal remarks about a person's clothing, hygiene, family.
- Sexual/homophobic comments about another person.
- Isolation of a student and encouraging others to do likewise.
- Threats to deal with 'squealers' 'rats'.
- Making school life difficult for hardworking, highly motivated students.
- Use of mobile phones (text messages, phone calls, images etc) to intimidate or isolate a person.
- Use of Internet websites and chat rooms to intimidate or isolate a person.

Effects of bullying:

Bullying can have a very damaging effect on a young person and can turn him/her into a moody, frightened and unhappy person. The victim's self-esteem and self-confidence can be lowered. In extreme cases suicide can result.

Children may be vulnerable to bullying if they:

- are different in any way.
- are insecure or timid.
- are clumsy or awkward.
- have poor personal hygiene.
- are high achievers who work hard at school.
- are underachievers who may have learning difficulties.
- are individuals who have few friends.
- are over-protected at home.
- have different racial or religious backgrounds.

Children may act out bullying behaviour because they:

- like the feeling of power.
- feel insecure or inadequate.
- have been bullied themselves.
- see bullying in their own home.
- are spoilt and always expect to get their own way.
- feel angry and frustrated at some aspect of their own lives.

Guidelines for Parents

Possible signs of bullying:

If you are concerned or become aware of any of the following you may have reason to suspect that your child is being bullied.

Children may:

- Be afraid of walking to or from school.
- Beg you to drive them to school.
- Change their route to school.
- Be unwilling to go to school.
- Have unexplained changes of mood – especially on Sunday night or Monday morning.
- Experience re-occurrence of pre-existing medical conditions
- Begin doing poorly at school.
- Come home regularly with clothes or books destroyed; possessions go missing.
- Come home starving – lunch money has been taken.
- Become withdrawn or distressed or stop eating, or start stammering.
- Cry themselves to sleep, have nightmares and even call out ‘leave me alone’.
- Ask for money or begin stealing (to pay the bully)
- Have unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Have frequent minor illnesses on school mornings – headaches, stomach upsets etc.

If your child is acting out bullying behaviour:

- Remain calm – don’t bully or hit the child.
- Try to find out why your child is acting out this bullying behaviour.
- Make it clear that the behaviour must stop and apologise to the victim.
- Seek professional help if necessary.
- Ask your child to put himself/herself in the victim’s place.

If your child is being bullied:

The most important thing to do is to make sure that the bullying is stopped. **YOU MUST SPEAK OUT. SILENCE NURTURES THE POWER OF THE PERSON ACTING OUT THE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR.**

- Get full details of what is happening from your child.
- Keep written records – day, date, details etc. of incidents and witnesses.
- Approach the child’s Class Teacher, Year Head or Principal. **DO NOT** approach the person acting out the bullying behaviour or his/her family.
- Ensure that the child gets ongoing support at home. The school counsellor is available to help both the persons acting out the bullying behaviour and the victims.

Please note that all information given to the school is treated in a sensitive and confidential manner which does not further endanger the victim.

REMEMBER: if we don't know it is happening we can do nothing about it.

Guidelines for Teachers

All members of the teaching staff should be vigilant with regard to bullying. Many of the signs parents have to watch out for at home can also manifest themselves in school.

Possible signs of bullying:

- Increased instances of absenteeism.
- Unexplained changes in mood, behaviour or attitude.
- Disimprovement in work.
- Possessions going missing.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Comments from other students.

Teachers should record incidents of bullying and report them accordingly to the Class Teacher, Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.

It is possible for teachers to act out bullying behaviour:

- All teachers are asked to monitor their own behaviour on a regular basis.
- Unfairness in dealing with students cannot be tolerated or supported in any way by school management.
- Derogatory comments made to any student cannot be tolerated or supported by school management.

Anti-Bullying Process:

If a student is being bullied the following steps should be taken:

- A decision needs to be taken initially about the level of seriousness of the incident concerned before beginning the anti-bullying process.
- The incident should be reported to Class Teacher or Year Head.
- Both the person acting out the bullying behaviour and the victim will be addressed by the Class Teacher or Year Head. A bullying Incident Report Form to be completed and placed in the student's file.
- If the incident is more serious parents/guardians will be informed.
- If deemed necessary relevant staff members will be informed

Guidelines for Students

If you are being bullied or suspect another student is being bullied report the incident immediately to somebody you trust e.g. Mentor, Senior Prefect, Class Teacher, Year Head, Subject Teacher, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal, Principal, Parent etc.

Sanctions

It is the policy of the school to rehabilitate the persons acting out the bullying behaviour rather than punish them.

- A simple warning may be sufficient to deal with minor incidents.
- If the matter is more serious parents will be informed or asked to come to the school.
- Sometimes parents' may be advised to seek counselling for the person acting out the bullying behaviour.
- When all other strategies have failed the person acting out the bullying behaviour may be suspended.
- If serious/persistent incidents of bullying continue the school may have no option but to ask the Board of Management to consider indefinite suspension or expulsion of the person acting out the bullying behaviour.



COLÁISTE CHILL MHANTÁIN

BULLYING INCIDENT REPORT FORM

DATE OF INCIDENT: _____ **CLASS/YEAR:** _____

STUDENTS INVOLVED: _____

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT:

ACTION TAKEN: _____

SIGNED: _____ **DATE:** _____

CLASS TEACHER/YEAR HEAD COMMENTS (OPTIONAL) _____

PARENTS HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED: YES ___ NO ___

SIGNED: _____ **DATE:** _____