

Bully-Proofing Guidelines

Rationale

NZSJ believes in providing a safe environment for all members of the school community. Children and young people have a right to feel safe and secure. It's important that as adults, we listen to children and young people and help them find the support they need.

Aims / Purpose

- To ensure each member of the school community can thrive in an environment that is safe and secure.
- To promote an environment where people are treated with respect and that bullying is not tolerated.
- To help adults understand what bullying is, identify signs of bullying and know what steps to take if bullying is suspected in the school.
- To ensure that the school community understands what bullying is and what strategies are used to bully-proof the school.

What is bullying?

Bullying behaviour is serious and complex. It is a form of aggressive behaviour. Most widely accepted definitions of bullying behaviour are based around the following four things:

1. Bullying is deliberate - harming another person intentionally.
2. Bullying involves a misuse of power in a relationship – there is real or perceived imbalance that may be based on physical size, age, gender, social status, or digital capability and access.
3. Bullying is usually not a one-off but is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated over time. It is when one student (or group of students) keeps picking on another student again and again to make them feel bad.
4. Bullying involves behaviour that can be harmful – it is not a normal part of growing up.

What is not bullying?

Bullying is a word sometimes used to describe things that are not actually bullying. These other behaviours are just as serious and upsetting, but may need to be sorted out in a different way. Sometimes there may be a fight or argument between students. If this happens

once, or with a friend and they can sort it out, it is not bullying. Not liking someone, a one-off mean or spiteful act, or isolated incident of aggression are not bullying.

Types of Bullying

Verbal bullying:

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm
- Using discriminatory language to offend someone

Social bullying:

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public

Physical bullying:

- Hitting/kicking/pinching
- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude hand gestures
- Inappropriate physical contact

Cyber Bullying:

- Sending mean texts or IMs to someone
- Pranking someone
- Hacking into someone's device
- Being rude or mean to someone in an online format
- Spreading secrets or rumors about people online
- Pretending to be someone else to spread hurtful messages online
- Mocking/making fun of someone on an online platform

Signs of Bullying

Most bullying behaviour is hidden from adults' view. It is essential to take all allegations seriously. If a child is involved in bullying, they may display the following signs:

- Seems anxious or negative about school.
- Show fear of going to and from school.
- Exhibit reluctance to attend school, leading to feeling unwell in the mornings.

- Experience a decline in schoolwork performance.
- Display hesitation to join certain activities.
- Regularly come home hungry, with lunch or lunch money missing, or belongings damaged or missing.
- Have unexplained bruises, cuts, or scratches.
- Become submissive or withdrawn in the presence of other children, spend more time alone, or experience a sudden loss of friends.
- Appear unhappy, insecure, with low self-esteem or self-confidence.
- Make statements like "nobody likes me" or "I haven't got any friends."
- Express thoughts of wanting to hurt someone or seeking revenge.
- Display anxiety about using their computer or mobile phone, becoming visibly upset after using it or avoiding it altogether.
- Close the screen or hide their mobile device when others enter the room.
- Show nervousness upon receiving a text message or email or receive suspicious texts and emails.
- Refuse to disclose what's wrong, possibly out of fear of the bully.

It is important to note that these signs could indicate other problems and not mean that bullying is certainly taking place. However, bullying should be considered as a possibility and investigated. Also note that one or two of these could be normal, but the more of these signs a person is showing, the more likely something is going on that should be looked into.

Strategies to bully-proof the school.

We aim to prevent bullying by:

- Using the curriculum, form classes, and assemblies to raise awareness of the school's expectations and teach students the skills and values that will enable them to become positive members of the school community.
- Adhering to the Behaviour Policy, which rewards positive behaviour and sets out clear actions/consequences for misconduct.
- Providing support to children who are bullied, as well as support and guidance to bullies to help them change and make amends.
- Encouraging positive values to help everyone have integrity and do the right things.
- Addressing incidences of bullying openly where appropriate.
- Ensuring children are well informed about whom they can tell and how they will be responded to.
- Ensuring that a range of play equipment is available for children at playtimes.
- Supervising students at all times during the school day.
- Providing peer mentors and pastoral mentors for those children who may need more support.
- Involving parents in the prevention and responses to bullying.

- Ensuring all staff understand their role in listening to and responding promptly to complaints from students and parents about disrespectful behaviour

Dealing with incidents of bullying

- Reported incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. A detailed report will be compiled and shared with the Head of School and other relevant members of the school team.
- Any incident of bullying that has been addressed will be followed up with both the victim and the bully to ensure that it has not resumed.
- Students who have been bullied will receive reassurance and ongoing support. Age-appropriate advice and strategies to restore self-esteem and confidence will be provided.
- Students who have engaged in bullying behaviour will also receive support and guidance, as appropriate, with encouragement to acknowledge the wrongdoing and the necessity to change their behaviour. Parents will be informed to support and assist in promoting a positive change in the student's attitude.

Actions involving the Bully:

- The bully will be supported to recognise, own and reflect on their behaviours and its effects.
- The bully will be supported and advised to help change behaviour and make amends
- The bully's parents will be involved.
- Appropriate sanctions will be applied and recorded.
- The bully may be allocated a Mentor or be asked to meet with a therapist.
- If conflict and / or inappropriate behaviour resumes, the school may try other methods including but not limited to changing classes or meeting one-on-one with the student.

Actions involving the Victim:

- The victim will be supported with strategies for how to deal with unwanted behaviours.
- The victim will be protected (if necessary) in order to ensure their safety.
- The victim's parents will be involved.
- The victim may be allocated a Mentor

References:

<https://parents.education.govt.nz/secondary-school/wellbeing/bullying/>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/>

<https://bullyingfree.nz/preventing-bullying/a-whole-school-approach-to-bullying-prevention/>