

CHILD SIDE POLICY FOR BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Statement of Intent:

Child Side School recognises that Bullying (and the associated victimisation) behaviours are complex to identify and resolve, yet as a school we are committed to working with the School Community to resolve and eliminate any bullying Behaviour at School. Child side School does not tolerate bullying behaviour and offers a supportive nurturing approach to its treatment.

1. What is bullying behaviour?

We consider bullying to be a set of repeated behaviours and attitudes rather than a person. We also consider victimisation to be a set of repeated behaviours and attitudes rather than a person. We see both of these behaviours and attitudes to be learned responses (which can become habitual). A person makes a conscious choice to adopt either of these behaviours or attitudes. This separates bullying from normal developmental behaviours such as rough and tumble ‘horseplay’ or emotional responses such as “I don’t want to be your friend’. Both of these attitudes and behaviours (of bullying and victimisation) can be found in children and adults and the personal history behind these attitudes and behaviours is critical to understand in order to respond appropriately. Dealing with these behaviours and attitudes is a long term process which requires multiple perspectives from the home and school community.

Bullying behaviour arises from attitudes that involve one person/group having inappropriate power over another person or group. These attitudes give rise to **repetitive** bullying/victimisation behaviour which may target other random or specific individuals/groups **over a period of time**. Bullying is the wilful, conscious behaviour (stimulated by negative attitudes) designed to hurt, threaten or embarrass someone emotionally or physically over a sustained period of time. Victimisation is also a behaviour stimulated by negative attitudes that responses to the bullying behaviour/attitude in helpless

ways and affects the quality of that person/group's life over a sustained period of time.

The school culture supports adults and children in recognising these long term behaviours and attitudes and seeing them as inappropriate **choices** that will significantly affect the wellbeing of individuals and groups.

2. How we respond to bullying/victimisation behaviours and attitudes.

At Child Side School we see the **attitudes** behind these repeated behaviours as being the starting points to begin to see how, why, what... The personal histories of the individuals/groups often give insights into the attitudes and choices of behaviours and the resulting consequences. We try and raise awareness about these attitudes, behaviours, choices, consequences and discuss options and alternatives again and again. We engage in using the habits of mind (Deborah Meier's "The Power Of Their Ideas...") asking those involved for their personal body of 'evidence' (their emotions, reasons why, previous experiences...), multiple perspectives (to jump into another's 'skin'.), to project "What if...? Or Supposing that..?" (conjecturing other possibilities), finding patterns and relationships between behaviours/attitudes/choices... and asking what does it all matter and to whom? We offer a range of strategies to try and raise awareness of what is happening and why and how we respond has an impact on the long-term outcomes. We revisit these again and again and again. Any 'Critical incidents' are recorded and reported to D.E.S. within 48 hours. Critical Incident reports are used to document and reflect on the many aspects of the incident or behaviour patterns. Families, staff and the children involved are included in this process when appropriate. Our "Guiding Children's Behaviour" policy is followed to deal with issues of bullying and victimisation. In extreme cases the school will endeavour to find outside support in the form of school psychologist services or other appropriate services.

Parents, educators, all staff and children need to be aware about what bullying and victimisation is and to look at themselves to see how they respond to these repeated situations. We need to all recognise that we are dealing with unacceptable behaviours and attitudes rather than targeting the person as being unacceptable. Self-awareness and self-talk and looking behind the scenes and towards future scenes are essential to try and change attitudes and patterns of behaviour. This needs to happen at the time of a particular situation and in many other proactive

situations when emotions are not heightened. There needs to be a realisation that bullying and victimisation are complex issues with substantial personal histories behind them.

We do not see reduction of these behaviours and attitudes as a simple matter or by adopting a single ‘programme’. We see our approach as being embedded in the whole school culture and being multi-faceted in all that is said, done and expected. We see our school philosophy and culture as one that promotes diversity and accepts differences and similarities rather than promoting competitiveness that puts another down or excludes them for no reason. Personal challenges and co-operative behaviours are modelled, discussed and encouraged. Welcoming and inclusive attitudes and behaviours are constantly promoted. Words and actions are seen as something that people have control over and that choices can be made whether they are used as tools to help or weapons to harm. Emotions are acknowledged and respected, even if the behaviours are unacceptable. Any person displaying bullying or victimisation behaviours/attitudes are given opportunities to be heard from their ‘skin’ and are encouraged to be reflective and find their own strategies and consequences (if and when appropriate). We do not wish children or adults to feel disempowered and rely on other adults (governments, agencies, schools, ‘experts’...) to solve their issues, without first looking inside themselves. However we acknowledge that children, their families and staff should feel supported and understood and that school should be an emotionally and physically safe environment for everyone!

We do not wish for bullying and victimisation behaviours and attitudes to go underground because of a perceived attitude of children that these behaviours are okay as long as adults don’t see them. We will not put aside these issues because they are too hard to deal with. We intend for our school to remain small and personal so that we can remain involved in children’s lives.

VERSION	DATE REVIEWED	DATE RATIFIED	CHANGES MADE	AUTHOR OF CHANGES
1	June 2011	March 2012		LO
1	April 2014	7 May 2014	Reviewed no changes made	KM
2	May 2016	15 June 2016	Inclusion of 48hour critical incident reporting period	KM