

## 1. GENERAL

- 1.1 Taney Parish Primary School, Sydenham Villas, Dundrum, Dublin 14, Tel: 2985015, is a co-educational national school in the state education system under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin.
- 1.2 There are 446 pupils (239 boys, 207 girls, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009) in the school.
- 1.3 The school is a double-stream school, with two classes at each standard from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> Class. Pupils normally enrol and attend at the school after their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday and leave after their 12<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- 1.4 This policy emerges from the ongoing review process of all aspects of the life and work of the school which is embedded in the culture of the school. It serves to expand on the school's approach to countering bullying behaviour, as outlined in Section 3 of our Code of Behaviour, adopted in May 2003. Section 3:
  - accepts the Department of Education & Science's definition of bullying.
  - acknowledges the serious effect bullying behaviour can have.
  - commits those in a position to do so to counter bullying behaviour, as outlined in Section 4 of our Code of Behaviour.
  - describes how awareness of bullying behaviour is heightened amongst all in the school community.
- 1.5 The present review is prompted not by any change in the long-standing culture of high-standard behaviour, but by a desire constantly to review and improve, where necessary and appropriate, on procedures and practices in place to counteract unacceptable behaviour.
- 1.6 The school staff reviewed this Anti-Bullying Policy *over several meetings* in the Spring Term of 2005.

## 2. BULLYING

- 2.1 In September 1993, the Department of Education & Science issued guidelines on countering bullying behaviour in primary and post-primary schools and these guidelines offer a definition of bullying:

*“Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others.*

*Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, can scarcely be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing, it is bullying.”*
- 2.2 The school accepts the Department of Education and Science's definition of bullying.
- 2.3 The Department of Education & Science identifies a number of different types of bullying, and the school accepts and concurs with this elaboration of what constitutes bullying. This includes physical aggression, damage to property, extortion including demands for things, intimidation, abusive phonecalls including, in recent times, abusive text messages, isolation, name-calling, slugging.

### **3 EFFECTS OF BULLYING**

3.1 It is well-recognised that bullying can have a very serious effect on individuals and, for this reason, any incidents of bullying that arise are always dealt with promptly.

3.2 Some of the common reactions to being bullied are:

#### **Physical Effects**

- Frequent minor illnesses, aggression, violence, fights, physical damage, loss of or damage to property.

#### **Academic/School Effects**

- Punctuality problems, deteriorating academic performance, poor attendance, truancy, school drop-out, school refusal, reluctance to participate in playground, group or school activities.

#### **Emotional/Psychological Effects**

- Anxiety, anger, loss of confidence, loneliness, fear, social isolation, depression, suicidal thoughts/behaviour.

### **4 HEIGHTENING AWARENESS OF BULLYING**

4.1 As many young children may be unaware that the behaviour they engage in may be described as bullying, measures are taken, both in school assembly and in classrooms, to ensure that children understand the types of behaviour that are not tolerated.

4.2 The following strategies are adopted to heighten awareness of bullying in our school:

- The topic of bullying is dealt with in the classrooms through the Social, Personal & Health Education Programme (including the Stay Safe Programme), the Religious Education Programme and through activities to promote self-esteem.
- At the start of each term, the topic of bullying is covered in senior school assemblies. During these assemblies, the definition of bullying is explained and revised. Strategies are explained to children as to what to do if they feel they are being bullied.
- This policy, and our Code of Behaviour, are circulated to all parents on the first day of the new school year each year.

### **5 PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

5.1 When a pupil reports (s)he has been bullied, it is very important that (s)he is given the opportunity to speak freely with a trusted adult, normally, in the school context, a school teacher. The teacher will take note of the nature of the incidents being reported, the date, the time, the location, the names of those involved and the names of witnesses if there are any identified. Any notes which are taken of disclosures made by children are kept locked in the Principal's office.

- 5.2 The pupil will be told that:
- Help is available.
  - Action will be taken to stop the bullying.
  - Telling is the most important step to get the bullying stopped.
  - Bullying can happen to anyone and that nobody should have to put up with it.
- 5.3 If there is a risk to the pupil's physical safety, then steps will be taken immediately to ensure that the child's safety is protected at all costs.
- 5.4 The pupil reporting bullying towards them will be told that it may be necessary to talk to pupils involved in the bullying, as well as parents, other pupils who might be witnesses, and other school teachers. Only people who need to know of the bullying behaviour will be told of it.
- 5.5 A person reporting incidents of bullying will be reassured that any other young person who is interviewed about their involvement will be warned not to retaliate, or spread gossip, and that this will be checked up upon.
- 5.6 The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable bullying behaviour:
- Reasoning with the pupil: A distinction is drawn between a pupil and the actions a pupil may engage in.
  - Reprimand, including advice on how to improve.
  - Temporary suspension from peers, friends or others.
  - Loss of privileges.
  - Detention during a break period.
  - Referral to Principal.
  - Communication with parents.
  - Suspension.
- 5.7 It is well-recognised that communication with parents is a key factor in the elimination of behavioural/bullying difficulties in schools. For this reason, parents will always be kept up-to-date with regard to behavioural issues, as required. As a general principle, parents are involved in the early stages of behavioural difficulties, rather than as a last resort.
- 5.8 From time to time, as the teacher deems appropriate, all pupils in classrooms will fill up a pupil bullying questionnaire form. The purpose of this form is to identify the nature and level of any bullying behaviour that might be ongoing in the classroom or school grounds during school hours.

## **6 DISTRIBUTING THE POLICY**

This policy will be communicated to all parents on the first school day of each school year from September 2006.

## **7 REVIEW**

- 7.1 This policy was formally adopted by the Board of Management at its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2005.