

Mount Anville Montessori Junior School
Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction:

The Policy was formulated by the staff, given to the Parent's Council Committee for consultation and ratified by the B.O.M..

Scope:

This policy applies to the whole school community in their relationships with pupils, staff, B.O.M. and parents.

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying is a form of repeated aggression (verbal, psychological or physical) conducted by an individual or group against others. Bullying takes many forms:

- **Physical:** Pushing, hitting, pinching and other forms of violence or threats.
- **Verbal:** Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours and persistent teasing.
- **Emotional:** Excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule or any form of humiliation).
- **Racist:** Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- **Sexual:** Unwanted physical contact or abusive comments.
- **Cyber bullying:** Inappropriate texting or use of messaging online which leads to anxiety or causes upset.

“Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour which should not be condoned can scarcely be described as bullying. However when behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying”.
(Department of Education.)

Aims and Objectives.

- To enable Mount Anville Montessori Junior School to be a happy, safe and secure learning environment where each person is respected.
- To achieve a school environment where bullying is viewed as a form of unacceptable behaviour by all members of the school community.
- To show clearly that the ethos of the Society of the Sacred Heart and the philosophy of Maria Montessori form the basis of this policy.
- That all the partners in the school community work together in the interest of our children to prevent bullying from happening.
- To recognise “the uniqueness, inherent worth and dignity of each child” in keeping with our ethos.
- To ensure that the responsibility for prevention lies with the entire school community, teaching and non teaching staff, children, parents and management.
- To make members of staff, pupils and parents aware of the code of discipline and their responsibility in this regard.
- To provide guidelines for parents and teachers in dealing with cases of bullying.
- To ensure an attitude of love, compassion and respect for each other is cultivated within the children.
- To provide every child with the right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

Effects of Bullying:

Bullying can effect pupils in many different ways .When pupils are bullied their lives may be made miserable. They may suffer injury. They may be unhappy about coming to school. They may lose self confidence and self esteem, blaming themselves for the bullying. Some children may experience stressful symptoms such as stomach aches and headaches, nightmares and panic attacks. This form of unhappiness is likely to affect their concentration and learning. If unchallenged, bullies can learn that bullying is a quick and effective way of getting what they want.

Indications of bullying Behaviour- signs and symptoms.

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school.
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend.
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches).
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.
- Spontaneous out of character comments about either pupils or teachers.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance and or refusal to say what is troubling her/him.

These signs in isolation do not necessarily mean that a child is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination, these signs warrant an investigation in order to establish what is affecting the child.

Prevention of Bullying:

- Staff members, teaching and non-teaching, are perceptive and vigilant with regard to the signs and symptoms of bullying within the classroom and during supervision of activities outside the classroom.
- Children are encouraged to report all incidences of bullying.
- The Principal will ensure children are supervised during break times.
- Rules regarding conduct such as no running, shouting or rough games are made clear to both the children and the staff and are reinforced on a regular basis.
- Playground rules are clearly explained to both children and staff.

Please see Page 4 for Procedures for noting and reporting an incident of Bullying Behaviour

Programme of work with the children:

School Assemblies , S.P.H.E, circle time, class charters , discussion time, music, creative work and the Stay Safe programme and our Worry Box, should all be used to help foster a culture where bullying does not prevail. It is vital that the children be actively involved in the establishment of a proactive approach to prevention.

Roles and responsibility of the Parent:

- Discuss the experience with your child to find out precise details of what has happened.
- Reassure her/him that you and the school will help.
- Discuss what to do next with the child- suggest strategies for dealing with the incident.
- Encourage her/him to tell the teacher.
- Contact the school as soon as possible.
- Follow-up to ensure that the matter is dealt with and resolved.
- Discuss the effects of bullying behaviour towards others if your child is being bullied or has been involved in bullying behaviour.
- Ensure you reaffirm and reward positive behaviour.

Success Criteria:

- The school community will become intolerant of bullying behaviour, and confident of an immediate response to bullying incidences.
- All members of the school community will have a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour and feel free to report knowing that it will be dealt with appropriately. This will be assessed through discussion in S.P.H.E and Circle Time.
- Staff observation/discussion and feedback will ensure that a satisfactory outcome is reached.
- Usage of our worry box to monitor concerns.
- Random questionnaire given out to children periodically to monitor our success.

Staff and parents/guardians will help to support, develop and implement the bullying policy.

Timeframe for review: Annually

Responsibility for Review: SMT

Ratified By the Board of Management on 19th January 2011.

Procedures for noting and reporting an incident of Bullying Behaviour.

1. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be noted, investigated and dealt with by the teachers. An atmosphere in which the children are not afraid to tell and are confident that they will be listened to should prevail. This confidence factor is of vital importance.
2. It will be made clear to all children that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
3. All incidents of bullying or unkind behaviour will be investigated and monitored by the class teacher and where necessary by the principal. If it is concluded that a child has been engaged in bullying behaviour it will be made clear to him/her that he/she is in breach of the code of discipline. **Refer to the Code of Discipline.**
4. Children involved in a reported incident will be spoken to by the class teacher. Each child will be given the opportunity to tell their side of the story and to attempt to resolve the issues involved.
5. A **Behaviour Reflection Form** and **Incident Report Form** will be completed when deemed appropriate by the Principal.
6. The class teacher will arrange a meeting with the parents if it is deemed necessary. Parents will be informed as soon as possible so they are given the opportunity of discussing the matter and are in a position to help and support their children.
7. When bullying takes place outside of the classroom situation the child should report the incident to the Teacher/Supervisor on duty and/or the class teacher. Non-Teaching staff in the school should report any incident of bullying behaviour noted, or mentioned to them to the appropriate member of staff. The behaviour of the child/children involved in such incidences should be monitored carefully.
8. Staff involved with the child/children should be made aware of the situation at the discretion of the teacher.
9. If a parent wishes to discuss incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or which have come to their attention through their children or through other parents, they should approach and inform the child's teacher. When bullying appears to the parent to remain unresolved after a period of investigation by the class teacher, the matter should then be reported to the principal.
10. In the case of a complaint against a staff member this should normally in the first instance be raised with the staff member in question and if necessary with the principal. If it is felt that the matter cannot be raised with the relevant staff member directly, then the principal may be approached to act as liaison. In all cases the staff member will be kept informed.
11. Where cases relating to either pupil or a teacher remain unresolved at school level the matter should be referred to the Board of Management of the Montessori Junior School.
12. In all cases of children involved in bullying behaviour it is recognised that they will need assistance on an ongoing basis. This may involve school based strategies to deal with self esteem issues, (social, physical, personal or spiritual) and the enhancement of interpersonal social skills.
13. Professional assistance may also be required and the principal and staff will ensure that they follow advice given so that children receive care that is appropriate to their needs.