Bullying Prevention Policy

Definition of Bullying

‘Bullying is when someone repeatedly uses their power to hurt or scare others. It can be done by an individual or by a group. It can be carried out physically, emotionally or verbally. People bully because they feel bad about themselves or to gain popularity and sometimes even for pleasure.’

It can include:-
* Any form of physical violence such as hitting, kicking, pushing
* Calling people offensive names, teasing, spreading rumours
* Using put downs
* Exclusion, or ‘ganging up’ against someone
* Making degrading comments
* Forcing others to do something against their will
* Threatening others by word, gestures or actions
* Interfering with another person’s property
* Writing offensive notes
* Unwelcome touching
* The use of digital technologies

Being bullied can have different effects on different people:
Some feelings can include:-
* Feeling unhappy or left out
* Wanting to stay away or not join in
* Feeling frightened, embarrassed, angry or unsafe
* Finding it difficult to concentrate or sleep
* Being confused about how to deal with the situation

If you feel you are being bullied:
Remember that not all strategies work all the time. If these do not work seek help from an adult.
Do not show the bully you are upset, this may help avoid future provocation.
Do not ignore hurtful comments that upset you.
Use “I” statements, as they can be very powerful. Eg:-
“I don’t like it when you …..”
“I don’t like it when you say..........”

Role of students who witness bullying - ‘There are no innocent bystanders’
* Don’t join in – being part of the group where someone is being bullied is still being a bully.
* Report bullying, so both the target and the bully are able to get help.
* When possible tell the bully to stop, sometimes peer group advice is stronger than messages coming from an adult.
* Reporting bullying is a mature and responsible act. It is not “dobbing”.
Staff responsibilities:
* Ensure the school community is aware of the Student Welfare Policy
* Liaise with parents via the Principal or Welfare Coordinator when required
* Monitor student behaviour during recess and lunch times to ensure that appropriate behaviour becomes an integral part of the learning process
* Deal with all reported and observed incidences of bullying
* Strive to ensure students feel safe at all times
* Help create a school culture which does not tolerate any form of bullying
* Help students identify the various forms bullying can take
* Explore & discuss strategies that can help prevent bullying
* Model anti-bullying behaviour

Student responsibilities:
* Not bully other students. There is no reason to tease.
* Report any incidents at school, or on the way to & from school.
* Help prevent bullying situations by providing strong peer relations.
* Practise strategies being discussed in the classroom or individually
* Take responsibility for behaviour
* Respect others and don’t hurt their feelings
* Treat others fairly
* Take care of my own things and not steal or damage someone else’s property
* Try to sort small problems out without needing a third party to intervene

Parent responsibilities:
* Listen and have empathy with feelings, asking questions calmly to clarify the problem
* Watch for signs of bullying, both when your child is either a target or perpetrator
* If your child is the perpetrator, work with care and compassion but emphasise that any discussion is an explanation, not an excuse for the behaviour
* Speak to the school if their child is involved in a bullying situation. Be assured that something will be done. We cannot help if we don’t know what is happening.
* Instruct their child to report if they are being bullied
* Support your child if they have been bullied. Let them know that they are special individuals and help them to move on by encouraging them to use appropriate strategies for empowering themselves to deal with situations they may face
* Accept reasonable responsibility to work with the school to reinforce anti-bullying expectations, and follow up consequences if your child has been a perpetrator.
* Model anti-bullying behaviour.

Possible strategies to use include:
* Reinforce assertive behaviour, perhaps the use of ‘I’ statements, such as:
  
  I/We feel ____________ when you______________ and I/we want you to stop__________ and start______________.

* Explore feelings and perceptions through discussions of others’ body language, perhaps through photos, magazine pictures, role plays, picture books
* Encourage problem-solving by telling stories based on case studies and discuss different solutions